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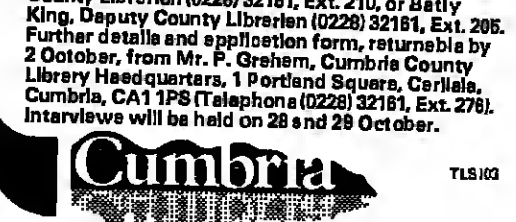
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SEPTEMBER 18 1981

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# A blast against the bishops

By Christopher Hill

LELAND H. CARLSON:  
Martin Marprelate, Gentleman  
Master Job Throckmorton Laid Open  
in his Colors  
445pp. San Marino, California:  
Huntington Library.  
0 87438 112 8

The Marprelate Tracts were the biggest scandal of Elizabeth I's reign. For thirty years there had been rumblings from a Puritan group in the House of Commons who pressed for further reform of the Church of England. The compromise settlement of 1559 seemed very inadequate to those who wanted to get back in the Protestantism of the reign of Edward VI, and perhaps to continue along the path of reformation. A learned theological warfare between the Presbyterian Thomas Cartwright, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and John Whitgift, had ended with the prebend of the latter to be Archbishop of Canterbury in 1583. Whitgift started a fierce campaign to root Puritanism out of the church.

Suddenly in 1589 a series of anonymous and illegally printed pamphlets appeared, signed by Martin Marprelate. (Martin-Luther: Marprelate because bishops obstruct reform.) They were no ordinary Puritan tracts. They were written in a witty, rumbustious, savage and extremely effective colloquial style. They not only denounced the bishops for the antichristian nature of their office; they dwelt in personal and often painfully accurate detail on their sexual misfortunes. (Marriage of the clergy was a relatively new possibility.) They gave examples of the bishops' greed and rapacity. In that hierarchical and deferential society, their approach was, to say the least, unusual. Marprelate addressed the Archbishop as "munkie Canterbury", "that miserable and desperate outcast John Whitgift, the scoundrel of Lambeth", "a plain Antichrist". "Neither will I say that his grace is an infidel (nor yet swear that he is much better)".

Indeed, I never said in my life that there was ever any great familiarity (though I know there was some acquaintance) between Mistress Toye and John Whitgift. And I'll defy 'em, I'll defy 'em, that will say so of me. And wherefore is Richard of Peterborough unmarried, but to provide for other men's children? O, now I remember me; he has also a charge to provide for, his hestess and cousin of Sibson. The petition which he bestowed upon her within this six months was not the best in England, the taken was not unmeet for her state.

John Aylmer, Bishop of London, was a dumb dunce. John of good London? Thomas Cooper, Bishop of Winchester, has a face "made of seasoned wainscot and will lie as fast as a dog can trot". Of a learned treatise by Dr John Bridges, Dean of Salisbury, the author writes "I have laughed as though I had been tickled, to see with what sleight he can throw in a popish reason, and who saw him? And with what art he can convey himself from the question, and go to another matter; it is wonderful to think. But what would not a dean do to get a bishopric?"

That was not the way in which people were used to hearing the lord bishops addressed. John Whitgift claimed to be the second person in the realm. Thomas Cartwright, the leading Presbyterian, wrote to Lord Burleigh to disavow the Marprelate Tracts, and Martin himself said "The Puritans are angry with me; I mean the Puritan preachers. And why? Because I am too open; because I jest. . . I am plain; I must needs call a spade a spade, a pope a pope." Martin Marprelate's scurrility and invective delighted the groundlings; his wit and his bombast thrusts delighted courtiers. Who was he?

The secret of the authorship was as well kept as that of Juozas in the

eighteenth century, though the printers of the Marprelate Tracts were caught and tortured. One suspect, John Penry, was hanged - though for a different offence. Another, John Udall, was sentenced to death and died in prison. A third, Job Throckmorton, was indicted by Warwick Assizes in the summer of 1590 for "making certain scurrilous and satirical libels under the name of Martin". Throckmorton appeared in court at Westminster in April-May 1591; the case was deferred and then quietly dropped. Throckmorton had meanwhile somehow mollified the great at court - certainly Lord Chancellor Hatton, possibly even the Queen herself. He was neither condemned, acquitted nor pardoned but, as Leland H. Carlson puts it, "kept dangling on the hook" until he died in 1601.

seventeenth-century touch. In the House he supported what Neale called "stark revolution" - the abolition of the existing ecclesiastical courts and laws.

But in 1943 Donald McGinn revived the case for Penry, and in 1966 he published a book to prove it. Leland H. Carlson's object is to refute this idea, and to establish finally the case for Throckmorton. With a long and distinguished career behind him as a student of Puritanism, he speaks with authority, and he seems to me to have succeeded in his task. Beth Penry and Throckmorton denied being Marprelate, though Throckmorton (Professor Carlson argues) would his denial very carefully and may have been equivocating; he is certainly the more likely of the two to have resorted to equivocation.

Carlson has much more to offer. He claims to have established Throckmorton's authorship of more than a dozen other anonymous writings. After a year's work with computers he "was convinced that the computer could not think, that it could not isolate colourful writing, foreign expressions, proverbs, legal expressions and other stylistic characteristics". He decided to become his own computer. He has analysed with great care nine books by Penry, seven by Marprelate and twenty-three other writings which he attributes to Job Throckmorton. On this basis he establishes "radical differences in the stylistic characteristics" of Penry and Throckmorton. "Whereas Penry is earnest and vehement, Throckmorton is sprightly and clever. Whereas Penry is heavy, Throckmorton is light and frivolous. Penry is imprudent and

pains to cover his tracks here, so that the printers and distributors could not with certainty implicate him, even under torture. Why should he have taken part in the day-to-day work of illegal printing if he was not the author? He was a man of considerable standing, a former MP. His father was a second cousin and friend of Queen Katherine Parr; another cousin was one of Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting. Throckmorton's devotion to the Puritan cause, unlike Penry's, was not a career. Indeed the difference between the treatment Throckmorton received and the "rackings and great tortments" applied to the humble printers, and the execution of Penry, is striking. "The knives durst not search my house", he said laughingly. "If they had, I would have caused [eased] them, they know well enough."

Throckmorton's mischievous self-confidence, paradoxically, fits in with the demotic style of the Marprelate Tracts. He had the arrogance of an established gentleman well aware of his own abilities, determined to use them on behalf of what he believed to be God's cause, with no inhibitions about appealing to the vulgar. He was not displeased with the sensation his pamphlets caused, but had no inclination to seek martyrdom. The ultimate dropping of the case against him must have resulted from court influence, perhaps (as Carlson suggests) through his lady-in-waiting cousin's influence with Elizabeth. Fortunately it was only in 1591 that the cousin entered into the clandestine marriage to Sir Walter Raleigh which led to several years' disgrace for both of them.

Carlson has entirely demolished the case for Penry as Marprelate. By the end one is left feeling almost sorry for Donald McGinn, so thoroughly has he been pulverized for his "inaccurate statements", his "garbling of evidence" and "violation of the canons of historical scholarship". Carlson has come as near as anyone to establishing the case for Throckmorton. His new attributions add a formidable body of work to Throckmorton's credit. This valuable book puts us in a much better position to assess Marprelate/Throckmorton's position in English literature and English history. John Carey, a good judge, described Marprelate as "the best English satirist before Dryden" - no mean claim, since that means better than Marston and Richard Overton.

The more we study the writings of Marprelate, the less easy it is to generalize about "Puritanism". His racy, scurrilous style shocked some of the godly in his own day; it is total incompatible with the traditional "killjoy" image of Puritanism which Margot Heinemann's recent admirable book on Middleton so effectively demolished. Marprelate treats solemn theological issues in a highly jocular manner. Carlson has counted fifty-eight allusions to gambling, card-playing, betting and drinking in works which he attributes to Throckmorton, thirty-three of them in the Marprelate Tracts. Throckmorton seems to have regarded "influence-peddling, bribery, promotion-seeking, persecution, injustice and tyranny" as graver sins than going to the theatre or playing bowls - though he enjoyed rebuking Bishop Aylmer for playing bowls on the Sabbath. In his attack on the bishops he struck a popular chord.

On the admission of Bishop Cooper himself, "he who can most bitterly inveigh against bishops and preachers, that can most uncharitably slander their lives and doings, thinketh of himself, and is thought of others, as the most zealous and earnest furtherer of the gospel. . . A lamentable state of time it is, wherein such intemperate boldness is permitted without any bridle at all." From the invention of printing, governments had tried to control the press, with varying success. England had a less developed bureaucracy than Continental absolute monarchies. Policing had to be left mainly to the



A Puritan family - from "The Whole Psalms in Four Parts", 1563.

So it was never legally established who Martin Marprelate was. Some twenty-two elements have been produced, most of them unlikely; but to recent years the possibilities have been reduced to John Penry, Job Throckmorton - both of whom certainly had some share in producing and distributing the tracts - or some totally unknown third party, who was not so involved. A scholarly consensus slowly grew up pointing to Throckmorton as the man. Formidable names supported the case for him: Edward Arber, Sidney Lee, F. J. Powicke, Dover Wilson, William Pierce, Patrick Collinson. The case seemed to be clinched when in 1957 Sir John Neale established that Throckmorton had got into serious trouble in the Parliament of 1586-87 for making three powerful, witty and savagely ironical speeches. He had been elected MP for Warwick after threatening to invoke the rights of the commonalty to vote - a very

pleading, given to epistrophe, but the tracts, the choice between them must be determined largely on stylistic grounds.

Here Carlson's case is overwhelming. Penry, a Welsh boy educated at Oxford, was no mean writer. He published a number of tracts, all but the first signed with his own name. He was capable of reasoned argument, eloquence and fervour. But in none of his writings does he show any trace of the jaunty, dramatic, flying style that was Marprelate's speciality. Part of the case against Penry rests indeed on his specific statement that though he agreed with the content of the tracts, he was less happy about their style.

Throckmorton's speeches in the Commons, on the other hand, reveal exactly the characteristics of Marprelate's style, and also the exuberant rashness, the arrogant self-confidence, of the tracts. And

## A Good Word

Nacrouns is a good word. We must make a poem Around it, or to one side, or behind it.  
Nacrouns? Not some drab anecdote of oysters.  
No, something richer in human history -

The nacrouns face of a lapid observed in Asia,  
Standing up stern in the back of a crisis,  
Arched over the driver, the driver bent over  
The handlebars and pumplog away at the pedals.

A sight to remember, far rarer than pearls  
In the centre of town, in a public transport,  
A towering leper, and a terrified driver,  
Striking through traffic, tin can at his tail.

- Or is it a chariot hurrying nearer?  
The chariot's him, he's in it. Along with us.  
There's scant time left for poems, and we don't like  
This one. A pity we ever stopped for nacrouns.

D. J. Enright



Stationers' Company and to the machinery of the church - the nearest to a bureaucracy the Tudor monarchy ever had. (When Archbishop Whitgift recommended Richard Bancroft for promotion to Bishop of London, it was his detective work against Marprelate that he especially praised.) This role of the church did not endear it to critics of the régime.

It is possible that the scandalous success of the Marprelate Tracts, and the savage episcopal repression which followed, may have strengthened the hands of the staid Puritans: at least it was easier for them to get into print between 1590 and 1640. But Marprelate reminds us of the popular radical wing in English Protestantism, which looks back through Simon Fish, Latimer, Lever and Crowley to the native Lollard tradition which A. G. Dickens has studied. He reminds, very justifiably, that many of the things late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Lollards said would seem more appropriate to the age of Voltaire. So would Marprelate.

Marprelate shared the fierce anticlericalism of the Lollards. "Reformation importeth the overthrow of the state of the clergy", he claimed - doctrine that Puritan ministers would hardly have agreed with but which was an opinion expressed by laymen from Lollards to seventeenth-century sectaries. Marprelate claimed kinship with Lollards' *Piers Plowman*, which sixteenth-century protestants associated (wrongly) with the Lollards. Carlson draws attention to an edition of *Piers Plowman* published in 1589 whose title-page paraphrases Martin's *Epistle*, and describes *Piers* as "grandson of Martin Marprelate". The type is similar to that of the Marprelate Tracts. Carlson suggests that it may have been issued by Throckmorton. It was certainly published by someone sympathetic to Marprelate.

This adds interest to the subsequent history of the Marprelate Tracts. Between 1590 and 1640 they were unpublished, but not forgotten. John Bastwick, one of Archbishop Laud's victims, had read them. There was a flurry of reprints of them and allusions to Marprelate as soon as the censorship collapsed in 1640. Recent work by Margot Heinemann and Morie Gimmelfarb-Buck has shown that Richard Overton, the future Leveller, was echoing Marprelate from his very first publication in 1640, and have suggested that he may have been responsible for re-printing the tracts. From 1645 onwards he published a series of works by Martin Marprelate Junior, or Martin Marprelate, which suggests that he expected his public to recognize allusions to Marprelate. Overton's crisp prose has all the wit and sparkle, all the moral intensity, of his model.

In 1645 he dedicated *The Arrangement of Mr. Persecution* to the Westminster Assembly of Divines an impermanent royal start to a tract which attacked all that the Westminster divines held sacred. In his character of "young Martin" Overton pointed out that the Assembly had spent more time in securing their own income from tithes than in producing a Directory of worship. ("For

he is an infidel and denieth the truth, that doth not provide for his family.") Young Martin offered himself as a candidate for a rich living.

Young Martin can thunder-thump the pulpit, oh, can stare most devoutly, rail and bawl most fervently, storm most tempestuously even till he foam at the mouth most precisely... Oh, Martin hath it at his finger's end, he's an university man, skilled in the tongues and sciences, and can sophisticate any text, oh he is excellent at false glosses and scholastic interpretations, he can wrest the Scriptures most neatly, tell the people it is thus in the original, an excellent man to make a presbyter!

William Walwyn and other Levellers followed suit.

The shocking thing about Marprelate was that his rollicking popular style, in addition to making intellectual laugh, also brought the Puritan cause into the market place. Isaac Walton tells us, on the authority of an Italian visitor, that thanks to Martin "the very women and shopkeepers were able... to determine what laws were fit to be made concerning church-government. Men of the slightest learning, and the most ignorant of the common people were made for... reformation of religion." That was the nuisance to which the Levellers were to appeal. By the Marprelate Tracts, Bancroft said, "the interest of the people in kingdoms is greatly advanced".

Bishop Cooper - one of Marprelate's principal victims - agreed that "if this outrageous spirit of boldness be not stopped speedily, I fear he will prove himself to be not only Marprelate but Mor-prince, Mar-state, Mar-law, Mar-magistrate and all together, until he bring it to an Anabaptist equality and community... Their whole drift, as it may seem, is to bring the government of the church to a democracy or aristocracy. The principles and reasons whereof, if they be once by experience familiar in the minds of the common people... it is greatly to be feared that they will very easily transfer the same to the government of the Commonwealth." As they shoot at bishops now, so will they do at the nobility if they be suffered, the Earl of Hertford agreed. That was indeed what the Levellers tried to do.

The argument that "if we make a party in the church we must come in party in the Commonwealth" was used by the bishops for the next fifty years: Oliver Cromwell was to refute it at the beginning of the Long Parliament. The Levellers took up Marprelate's style, but they spoke to a wider audience for a longer period of time than he had been able to do. In the end they too were suppressed; but not before they had established as a tradition what had previously been a nine days' wonder. Through them Martin Marprelate - or perhaps we should say Job Throckmorton? - exercised a direct influence on the evolution of that conversational prose which looks forward to Bunyan and Defoe. In the 1660s Charles II's censor aimed at suppressing "the great masters of the popular style." Fortunately he did not succeed.



*Bonnie Burns. The poet was also a farmer for much of his life; this ink drawing, showing Burns and other figures gathering the harvest, by William Bell Scott H.R.S.A. is included in a sale of Important Victorian and Modern Scottish Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings at Christie's & Edmonstone's, 14-16 Bath Street, Glasgow, on Thursday October 1.*

## Covert meanings

By Pat Rogers

IRVIN EHRENPREIS:  
*Acts of Implication*  
158pp. University of California Press. £9.  
0 520 04047 3

This short book, subtitled "Suggestion and Covert Meaning in the Works of Dryden, Swift, Pope, and Austen", consists of lectures delivered at Berkeley in 1978. It forms a pendant to the author's previous study, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values* (1974). The four essays are agreeable to read, as they must have made for pleasant listening in the lecture-room. Irvin Ehrenpreis possesses many of the highest virtues in a critic: he is immensely well-read, intellectually combative, and, unfailingly, lucid. It is a relief to come on an academic writer who can deal with large and complex issues without any resort to opaque jargon.

But the volume does begin with a mystery. The dedication, to Fredson Bowers, takes the form of two unidentified lines of Greek poetry. Such coded messages are a red rag waved before the tribe of reviewers, who like to feel they are privileged bystanders of the creative process. Thus excluded, I was duly led into research: the lines turned up in the *Oedipus at Colonus*. They are spoken by the hero in what A. J. A. Walicki called "the lengthy courtship between Theseus and Oedipus." Jebb translates, "and in the future still give me thy loyal care, as thou has given it to this hour." It can

hardly be that Ehrenpreis is casting himself as old, blind and peevish - for he is, I am sure, none of these things - or that he is asking for a tranquil burial in the Attic soil of Charlottesville. Perhaps the author's desire to retrieve a critical innocence lost in our own age has induced this Oedipal fantasy.

*Literary Meaning* was a strong, brave book. It argued for a realistic mode of intentionalism in criticism; it exposed many of the reigning follies, such as the ambition to "discover golden irony in the laudable mines of Defoe"; it subjected the easy invocation of "personae" to powerful and witty attack. Ehrenpreis believes that the best poetry "overflows, reaching beyond literature into reality." He sees formalist criticism as "denying the impulse that patently drives every great artist. He is always trying to say something of immense importance to him: this is what he (not the poem) means; this is his intention; this is what we must apprehend." Such unfashionable ideas were presented with great dash, and the book is perhaps the best that Ehrenpreis has ever written, as well as the most important confrontation between literary theory and eighteenth-century literature during the past decade. Its impact would have been greater had not Ehrenpreis incautiously filled out the volume with studies of works such as *Gulliver's Travels* and Pope's *Epistle to a Lady*, texts which no self-respecting literary theorist could deem required reading.

*Acts of Implication* puts similar ideas into practice, but its explicit theoretical content is slight. This is because Ehrenpreis discovered, as he tells us, that "the historical contexts of the works contributed far more to one's understanding of them than any system of analysis." Therefore, although the critic has a definite view about the way the authors in question should be read, he produces contextual readings rather than a mode of contextualism; he does not generalize his many insights into a statement of how historically determined messages are generated within a text, nor how they are properly extractable. He simply extracts them. He tells us that his notion of "implication" follows that of E. D. Hirsch, but actually it is yours and mine, the common-or-garden usage of the term for generations. To discover verbal nuance, concealed allusion, indirect statement, subtle shifts of tone - *huc ipse, hic labor est*.

And a worthwhile task, too, when it produces writing of such sustained interest. Ehrenpreis, sees Dryden's heroic tragedies as replete with the effects of romance, and stresses their "half sexual content." On Swift, the author finds a deeper social identification with his audience in the

*Drapier's Letters* than in the *Examiner*. The finest essay is that on Pope's methods are not new (naunder revealed by analysis of syntax, versification, imagery, etc), but the insights are fresh and eloquently expressed. For example: "Pope devised methods of attracting and reassuring those who might be hostile to his brilliance." Or again: "He conveys deep sympathy with the voluptuous impulse and deep uncertainty as to its consequence." And on *The Rape of the Lock*: "There is nothing placid, domestic, or parental about [it]. Its few sketches of security only prepare us for long passages of delightful uneasiness." Last, comes Jane Austen, in whose novels the author detects a kind of "metonymic" characterization, with men and women placed according to their interests, homes and physical attributes.

Ehrenpreis says so many things in a few pages, and says them so plainly, that he is bound to invite disagreement. For my part, I am not sure that the Drapier's use of scriptural references (especially those as familiar as David and Goliath) is pervasive enough to give him a "priestly" character in the Augustan milieu. Certain social judgments are likewise debatable. Ehrenpreis says that in *Emma* "Mr. Woodhouse reposes at the peak of the social pyramid as Miss Bates stands at the bottom." Even if he means, what he does not say, "the bottom of the genre", this is slightly inaccurate. The point about Miss Bates and her family is that they have come down in the world; and this obsolete category of distressed gentlefolk formed a loop in the social system. That is what is so unforgettable about Emma's rudeness, as Mr Knightley does not fail to remind her. Again, Ehrenpreis excludes Lady Catherine de Bourgh from the aristocracy; it is true that she has married beneath her, but it is apparent that she retains much of her standing as the daughter of an earl - whatever her pretensions, there is no suggestion that her connections have suffered.

On matters more truly literary, some might be disposed to challenge the critic's view of Scott, which sees the novels as dominated by political and religious ideology to the detriment of personal issues. It could be argued that, on the contrary, *Waverley* is at bottom a mutant *Bildungsroman*, with the hero's favours, conflicts and wanderings expressing his passage to manhood. On Jane Austen herself, Ehrenpreis seems to me judicious and sane - even if he thinks that Kitty Bennet was a "naughty girl" (I expect that her father also had a job to keep tracks of who was who). Throughout, he shows his capacity to harness learning and strong convictions to elucidate a wide range of literature.

DERNICE MARTIN:

*A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change*  
272pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.50.  
0 631 12973 1

What was it like to be a Gallo-Roman, or live out the last days of the Byzantine Empire? We may be well placed to judge. Threatened by powerful enemies beyond the frontiers, heavily outnumbered by "barbarians", lulled by past prosperity and reluctant to face the reality of change, the former custodians of civilized strength and virtue became provincial and effete. No doubt they were "caring" and compassionate, tolerant of eccentricity, witty and amusing, intrigued by astrology and other cults, hooked on self-expression, ever more *avant-garde*. Did the sexes exchange roles, dress, and make-up? Was there a drug culture? How loud was the Dionysiac music? Did priests and teachers ape the uninitiated? Did language itself decay? At all events, when the ramparts finally crumbled, there had been erosion from within.

Bernice Martin avoids this hazardous analogy; but her book inescapably suggests it. Don't be put off by the title: *A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change* might well have been called, by a more catchpenny publisher, *The Termites in our Midst*. But Mrs Martin gives no such hostages to academic fortune. As befits a lecturer in sociology (at Bedford College, University of London), she clocks the thesis in technical language which now and then becomes jargon. This is the major reason why Ricoeur and others (Benjamin attempted to graft phenomenology on to semiology in hermeneutic analysis). It would help us all, and might help even the writers of such sentences, if words like that were fined for obstruction. Drive past them, however, and you can explore a richly documented, wise and coherent account of the ways in which "our society" - as pop-sociologists incessantly say - is becoming de-structured, notably in the arts.

If one looks only at the superficial, theatrical extravaganza... the happenings, demonstrations, psychedelia and the rest, it is easy to assume that the counter-culture was merely trivial, ephemeral, a minor footnote in the margin of cultural history. From the viewpoint of the counter-culture's pioneers, it looks like a failed revolution. The argument of this book is that it was more significant than the first and less than the second. The counter-culture was an index to a whole new cultural style, a set of values, assumptions and ways of living which Tolstoy, Proust, and the rest of the great novelists, with uncharacteristic exaggeration, has called the "Expressive Revolution". The 1960s were the transformation point. They exemplified for society at large, in striking ways, processes which would expand the frames

In the last few decades [Mrs Martin writes] the Western world has experienced a transformation in the assumptions and habitual practices which form the cultural bedrock of the daily lives of ordinary people... The shift began as a sort of cultural revolution among a small minority of crusading radicals, and finished by altering some of our deepest - and therefore most customary and commonplace - habits and assumptions.

The book's dust-jacket shows a few examples. A middle-aged couple slumped in deck-chairs on a seaside promenade flanked by a group of mods or rockers; below them, West Indians loaf and glower, alongside a picture of white oriental cultists; on the bottom line, sullen-looking punks display jackets reading "Belsen was a gas", while a smiling, thickly made-up woman bares her right breast and a glum joker in clown make-up seems to be wearing not only safety-pins through his ears but a tart through his forehead and a television antenna through his cheek. In the book itself, Mrs Martin itemizes the ways in which the counter-culture has removed familiar landmarks: in art, in rock music, in youth activities, in education, in social work, and even in the church.

Given the power of prevailing economic criteria and their own declining status, the clergy must insist on the fundamental usefulness and relevance of what they do, and religion-as-social-work fits that need. The snag is that when the Church becomes matter-of-fact and prosaic, people seek mystery and poetry elsewhere - at worst in murderous semi-voodoo sects, at best in near-fraudulent cults from the far-out East.

Mrs Martin develops this argument less fully than she might; but on education she is very acute. Social progress, she points out, has become one of education's goals; but the kind of education offered has not always helped the poorer families to whom it has been extended. On the

within which expressive possibilities were currently confined. By the mid-1970s, when things which had seemed traumatic, shocking, revolutionary in the previous decade had been incorporated into mainstream culture. The pioneers of the 1960s had genuinely sought to remove the frames altogether, but in the event the consequences were less drastic. The frames stretched, sometimes a long way from their former contours, but they ultimately reasserted their nature as limits and margins.

Or, as Saul Bellow once put it, everyone nowadays believes like a Bohemian artist, without producing any art. I sometimes get the feeling that British people, at least, imagine themselves as the cast of television sitcoms, exchanging weak wisecracks, or plodding in the light fantastic footsteps of Monty Python or *Nat the Milkman*. It makes for spurious harmony, but hardly for solid achievement. Are we giggling while Rome burns?

I imagine - though I've no proof - that Mrs Martin fears we are. Her husband, David Martin, is a campaigner to save the Prayer Book from well-meant vandalism by tinkered devotes of Series III; and Mrs Martin has some shrewd, understanding words about radical Anglican priests. "The clergy tend to represent their role as hapless providers of the rituals which go along with mere citizenship... Given the power of prevailing economic criteria and their own declining status, the clergy must insist on the fundamental usefulness and relevance of what they do, and religion-as-social-work fits that need. The snag is that when the Church becomes matter-of-fact and prosaic, people seek mystery and poetry elsewhere - at worst in murderous semi-voodoo sects, at best in near-fraudulent cults from the far-out East.

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been depleted by military casualties.

The author is not a trained folklorist. He has not heard of Type Tales and Motifs, those professional tools used to demonstrate that a particular story, or element within it, is traditional and recurs in different areas and variants. Dialect, proverbs, riddles, verse, sword-dancing and folktales, all separate genres, are swept higgledy-piggledy into a final chapter entitled "Odds & Ends of Folklore".

Mr Nicolson could have done more original collecting himself, instead of leaning so heavily on the earlier work of Mrs Saxby and the late Ernest Marwick. However, he provides us with some fascinating information. Certain Shetland place-names arose from natural features resembling parts of the human body: Keen and Bruoga derive from Old Norse words meaning "cheek" and "breast". Heath rush was used for making besoms. And eel grass, a flowering plant that grows submerged in the sea, was dried and used for stuffing mattresses because it was thought to offer a sure protection from fleas. Oedon was known as "dead man's mittens" because the half-open buds resembled bluish finger-nails protruding through the grass.

To his description of Up-Helly-Aa, Shetland's famous winter festival, the author says that "Women's Lib has still not branched this bastion of male exclusiveness". He is writing of Lerwick, but within a wider context this is not correct. Country districts hold separate Up-Helly-Aa's and at Bressay in 1966 there were four squads (groups wearing fancy dresses), one made up of women; in 1977 there were seven or eight squads, several of them women. Lerwick itself excludes women, who go to Bressay to take part because there are not enough people there to make up the numbers. "Bressay Up-Helly-Aa was the first to admit women - the distinguished Shetland fiddler Tom Anderson once told me. 'They dress the others all admit women now. Women got into the other Up-Helly-Aa's after the War' - presumably because the male population had

*Culture and Society in Contemporary Europe*, edited by Stanley Hoffman and Paschalis Kiriakides (238 pp. George Allen and Unwin. £18.00). This is the second volume in the *Casebook Series* from the Center for European Studies at Harvard University. It includes selections from the writings of Lukács, Sartre, Benjamin, Goldmann and Umberto Eco, as well as some new material.

# A generation on the spree

By Richard Mayne

one hundred, the "gentlemanly" ideal of non-utilitarian culture still overshadowed useful and rewarding pursuits like engineering. On the other, the "permissive" unstructured, unstreamed, and uncompetitive style of teaching has proved better suited to middle-class than to working-class pupils with fewer books and less pushy parents. In both ways, middle-class education has sold the working classes short.

At this point in Mrs Martin's book, some well-conditioned hackles may rise. Yes, one of her articles has been reprinted in the *Cox-Boysen Black Paper* 1975. Yes, she does explicitly welcome the return to more formal teaching that she detects since the mid-1970s. "Even though the system will perhaps never be quite so 'formal and grammatical' again", But it would be wrong to regard her as a middle-class lady of the minor thanking God (in the 1662 version) for the preservation of the local grammar school. In the best-written and most attractive chapter of the book, she paints a glowing Hogartian picture of the working-class culture of the Lancashire cotton towns in which she grew up in the 1940s and 50s. This is not false nostalgia with the hardship and hunger left out, but a tribute to order and stability which yet reserved a place for what Mrs Martin calls the "liminal" - roughly translatable as "sprees". The point she makes, with great authority and conviction, is that satisfactory living has to contain both routine and escape, responsibility and fecklessness, hard graft and spies.

The "Expressive Revolution", by contrast, tended to be all spree. Made possible by affluence, it may

yet be curbed by slump. What remains certain, however, is that de-structuring, libertarianism, jeering at authority, and breaking all the rules, even without a slump or a counter-revolution, lead in the end to another kind of tyranny. Jeans, once a protest against natty suitings, become a uniform. In-group language and gesture become social ritual. Left-wing libertarians turn into left-wing hunters. Charles Manson's "family" kills.

It may be, as Mrs Martin says, that the "Expressive Revolution" has now been absorbed, learnt from, exploited, and tamed. It may be that, all along, it was no more than a modern version of the Romantic Movement: Wordsworth's a radish! I'm not so sure. For quite other reasons, I have lately been reading a great deal of material from the Second World War and its aftermath; and what strikes me most forcibly is the contrast between its tone and what is commonly acceptable now. One youngish woman inquiring into wartime heroes, recently wondered whether they could be real. "They were so very idealistic", she mused. Another child of the 1940s, this time a BBC producer, astonished me by saying that he couldn't understand what impelled anyone to die for his country. In the wider world, governments give in to terrorists in order to save civilian hostages; protesters against the arms race sometimes imply that nothing can be worse than death; and anti-miner humour makes it almost impossible to praise courage, tradition, law, age, and authority without sounding like an idiot. We've come a long way since 1945. Are we on the way to 1453?

## Dore Ashton ROSA BONHEUR

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Seeker & Warburg

## The century's contours

By John Stachniewski

C. A. PATRICKS and RAYMOND B. WADDINGTON (Editors):  
*The Age of Milton*  
280pp. Manchester University Press. £22.50.  
0 7190 0770 4

This is a collection of eleven new essays on every discipline (except, surprisingly, European literature) for which the seventeenth century is an object of study. The three editors take different angles - historical, political, statistical - on the history of the period; four more are in a broader, more literary or educational, though still historical, vein. Two deal with Milton and the arts. And the last two are on the subject of the century's contours. The editors are C. A. Patricks and Raymond B. Waddington. The volume is a

presence in the book's title seems to imply that it is a volume of essays - set about, belatedly perhaps, slanting the volume at literature.

Beyond the common period, there is really no principle of cohesion and not much attempt to emphasize what pertains to literature. Yet this editorial *laissez faire*, permitting an autonomy to each discipline which a single interpretive standpoint, say Basil Willey's, necessarily denies, makes for exhilarating reading in which one's perspective on the period keeps shifting. Exhilarating, too, is the brevity with which the sum of knowledge in a discipline is compressed. The pressure towards concision and concision towards brevity is in the blindness of the period's objectivity of the mere round-up. The authors stamp an individual style on subjects to which they have contributed importantly. (C. E. Young goes off on his way, for example, to a polemic for differ-

ences with his fellow historians A. H. Woolrych and Theodore Rabb.)

The book's chief usefulness should be as a map for research students; to guide them in neighbouring disciplines. Unlike and descriptive bibliographies, most of these articles deftly sketch the significant contours of their subject areas while at the same time discreetly advertising one to sources which expatiate on points raised. It is a shame, though, that the editors, having hit on the idea of numerical references to items in the bibliography, did not intervene on this technical point to assure that these were consistently embedded in the text. Instead of bypassing the conventional footnote - the curse of which is that one does not know what kind of information it contains - we are often given a doubly cumbersome footnote to a reference to an item given elsewhere.

And a worthwhile task, too, when it produces writing of such sustained interest. Ehrenpreis, sees Dryden's heroic tragedies as replete with the effects of romance, and stresses their "half sexual content." On Swift, the author finds a deeper social identification with his audience in the

idea of a "naughty girl" (I expect that her father also had a job to keep tracks of who was who). Throughout, he shows his capacity to harness learning and strong convictions to elucidate a wide range of literature.



## Prying into odd corners

By Patricia Craig

JENNIFER JOHNSTON:

*The Christmas Tree*  
167pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.50.  
0 241 10673 7

"Dying is an art," wrote Sylvia Plath; to write about the process of dying, bypassing the natural temptations to indulgence and excess, is no less so. The theme has attracted several novelists in the last year or two. May Sarton (*A Reckoning*) and Karen Gerson (*Burn Helen*) among them. Jennifer Johnston, whose new novel also has death as its subject, is a stricter stylist and a crisper commentator than these two. She deals unflinchingly with her emotional material.

It is partly the personality of her heroine that makes the dry approach possible. We never doubt the genuineness of Constance Keating's avowal that death seems "an attractive alternative to life, which I have never found very satisfactory" — though she has, in fact, counted on a further twenty-five years, and made plans to fill them. Constance, stricken with leukaemia at the age of forty-five, returns from London to her family home in Dublin, a town empty, her father having died recently to pass her first weeks. With her, in a carry-out, she brings her nine-month-old daughter. The conception of this child, and Constance's association with the father, take up about a third of the novel. The other sections deal with the drastic present (a first-person account) and the more distant past; the childhood recollections are suitably lightened to fit the tense mood.

Jennifer Johnston has always been preoccupied with images of decay and disintegration — the decline of the Irish "big house" in her first two novels, *The First World War* and *How Many Miles to Babylon?*; the diminishing of the grand ideals of Irish republicanism in *Shadows on Our Skin*. Now it is physical decay. "The one thing I can't bear is my own emaciated appearance," in *The Christmas Tree* she considers death as a steady movement towards obliteration, and imagines the shifts in perception the state would entail.

There are all kinds of links and connections between her novels. Mr Prendergast's dead soldier brother, in *The Captains and the Kings*, provides a name (Alexander) and a setting (the trenches) for the hero of *Babylon*, her third and perhaps least satisfactory novel (there is something a little forced and melodramatic in the fate that overtakes its protagonist, and these qualities are at odds with the wry, ironic spirit of the other five books). Big Jim, a minor character in *The Gates*, spends his days reliving the heroic events of the 1916 Rising and its aftermath up to the Civil War; and this is the era which the author re-creates so authoritatively in *The Old Jest*. The young heroines of these works are similar too: both nieces of the big house, both jaunty and opinionated, each determined to make her mark. In them, at their rapacious, age-incongruousness, which shapes the plots — is an agreeable trait.

"Turgenev's saying, 'Death is an old jest, but it comes to everyone,'" which gave a title to Jennifer Johnston's last novel, gives a theme to the current one. Constance Keating's is a harrowing but not a sordid end. She never exhibits the depressing querulousness of the invalid but only her own characteristic abrasiveness, magnified. Illness does not make her ineffectual. The difficult, younger daughter of parents slightly deficient in humour and understanding, she goes her own way, as she has always done. "You are... just the same as ever," her sister Barbara ("Bibi") complains, meaning that she is capricious and wilful. Pleasant, ordinary, overbearing Bibi, described in her youth as a "super" girl, stands in the novel for unimaginative good will and energy. (She takes over without protest the care of Constance's baby.) Her manner produces

a tangled reaction in her sister — a compound of guilt, gratitude and exasperation.

Bibi, in middle age, is stuck with an affection of her girlfriend; a habit of inserting French phrases into her conversation. "Comme c'est beau," she said, stopping in the doorway. She is one of those purveyors of clichés in Jennifer Johnston's work who are so easily discomfited by sharpness or banter. They believe in acting for the best; their view of life is very simple. An early version of the type is Eileen Evans, the rector's wife in *The Captains and the Kings*, who is driven by some fearful impulse of kindness to thrust her ministrations on poor, reclusive Mr Prendergast. It takes a fair amount of plain speaking before this obtuse lady is discouraged from acting the part of the sincere friend. Handsome, humourless Harry, in *The Old Jest*, is another whose responses are irritably unwary, from the point of view of the playful heroine. After she has teased, disconcerted and embarrassed him, and he has gone off affronted, "I really want him to love me," Nancy Gulliver announces ruefully to the cat.

Insensitivity to the true wishes of others makes these characters fit subjects for mild satirical treatment. Their behaviour is entertainingly awful. (Bibi's infelicitous choice of words — "The children are dying to see you" — is a mark of her unnerveful clumsiness.) They also act as a kind of counterpoint to the significant friendships in the books. Jennifer Johnston is peculiarly susceptible to the charm of the unexpected alliance. In story after story, traditional antagonists, like the aloof old gentleman and the semi-delinquent boy of her first novel, develop a cautious liking for one another. (Only in *The Gates* do we find an element of sexual feeling to complicate the irrepressible affinity which subverts differences of class and outlook.) The friendships prosper for a time before some outside disturbance or irresistible opportunity leads to an act of betrayal; the faithless ones are not greatly to blame.

The pattern is broken in the new novel: though a lucky attachment between two unlike people comes into this narrative too, it is not at the centre of the theme. Bridie May, a founding employed by Bibi as a kind of nursemaid to her sister (wayward Constance refusing to go into hospital), immediately brings a sense of calm and order to the ill-kept house. Bridie's childlike elation — she is savouring for the first time her break with the Catholic orphanage where she grew up — makes her a pleasing companion. She makes no demands and creates no discordant effects. The nurse has seen to it that she is trained in obedience, but she is not meek or servile.

Her presence helps, but Constance is really beyond the need for ordinary discourse. The dying is properly solipsistic; and one of the preoccupations ascribed to them, the effort to impose a form on the events of the past — coincides with the novelist's primary aim. To give the sharpest edge to the irony inherent in this circumstance, Constance is a novelist — a would-be one at least, who perseveres in spite of radical discouragement from a superficially executive in publishing; she goes on writing as long as she can hold a pen. This is an optimistic gesture. There is an implication — nowhere overtly expressed — that her last manuscript will not be valueless.

The impulse to relive the past is there, but it is not indulged in thoughtlessly. When Constance dwells on her childhood it is not with nostalgia but with the most telling exactitude. We, Bibi and I, were sent ahead to walk with Nanny. Socks pulled tight up to the knees and held with black elastic garters that left a pattern on your legs that never faded through the winter months. Hats tied firmly under the chin with velvet ribbons that matched the collars of our coats. The rector's voice tumbled from peeling walls to peeling walls as he prayed for the soldiers and sailors fighting in the war. I never really gave

it all a second thought and Bibi turned to Charles and Ronnie with an enthusiasm that turned as the years went by to an almost evangelical sternness; gaiety and happiness were replaced by duty and virtue.

Middle-class, Protestant Dublin in the middle years of the century: the later decades and tennis parties belong to this steady, uninspiring world too. It's a world that Bibi (whose only transgression was to marry a Catholic and adopt his religion) inhabits naturally; she is caught in a number of outgoing poses, captivating everyone around her, while adolescent Constance glowers in an ugly yellow dress. The girls' mother, who died distressingly in hospital some years before the onset of Constance's illness, materializes in the empty house to reprimand her young daughter for continuing eccentricity. "You always had to be difficult." This is neither exactly an apparition nor a remembered voice sounding in Constance's head, but rather a matter of one shading into the other. It's not a new device of Jennifer Johnston's: Mr Prendergast also experiences brisk, ironic confrontations with admonitory figures out of the past. And Minnie McMahon, in *The Gates*, holds dialogues with her conscience (a ghost), she calls it: "Not you again," supplying the recriminations herself — rather like Gavin Burke, in Brian Moore's *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, who comically projects his misgivings and self-accusations onto an eleven-inch statue of the Divine Infant of Prague.

Constance's allies are Bridie May and the doctor, Bibi (sn old friend

who once wanted to marry her). These two understand the courage behind her refusal of comforts and technical aids to dying. Constance is not expecting a miracle or a revelation; she attaches her hopes for productive feeling to an object whose connotations, for her, are purely secular: a small Christmas tree festooned with blue lights. It is the middle of December. "The snow had stopped but the east wind was still blowing bitterly." If you could choose your time to die, Constance thinks, this would be a good moment. A sad tale's best for winter.

Dying Constance is one of Jennifer Johnston's gallant drinkers: Mr Prendergast, Nancy Gulliver's Aunt Msry and Major McMahon, who prefers his own boot room to the public bar, are others. Drink does not make these people tiresome or disorderly; it is a gesture merely, against stiffness or fuss. Whiskey — the water of life — keeps Constance going at the point of death. (When she can no longer keep food down, she jokes gamely about Augustus who wouldn't eat his soup.) She is waiting — like Yeats in Auden's poem — to disappear in the dead of winter; and also for a Polish Jew named Jacob Weinberg who may or may not come to claim his daughter (Constance's daughter). If he does, it will save the child from being brought up decently in Bibi's Catholic home.

Jennifer Johnston has always been expert in catching the broken-off utterances of those whose sentences peter out as confusion falls upon their thoughts; a jumpy, agitated prose style, all interruptions and

ellipses, is probably the best way to render agitations and upsets, which her books abound. *The Christmas Tree* is colder and quieter (though it has moments of high spirit), its setting, between the extremes of country mansions with thistles up to the windowsills and ten bedrooms standing empty, and the kitchen houses and gimcrack flats of battered Derry, which she dealt with earlier, gets close to suburbia and the patterns of ordinary life — though the author allows herself plenty of scope for that humorous prying into odd corners which she does so well.

She is an Irish writer who has made good use of the striking subject matter the country offers. I can think of no moral problem more vividly or economically set out than the one made in the little drama of social vicissitudes and class relations which occurs in *The Gates*, at the end of the overgrown driveway where they have stood for more than a hundred years; or to the dreadful Americans whose great-grandfather carved them? The author wisely nixes no comment; there is more to this issue than a simple tussle between the run-down and the jumped-up. *Shadows on Our Skin*, her novel about the present troubles in the North, is, for all its seriousness and its painful authenticity, the most engaging piece of fiction to come out of that dismal conflict. To her new novel Jennifer Johnston brings those attributes that have already made her work so impressive: assurance, clarity of tone, and a style perfectly balanced between bravado and delicacy.

## Doleful dichotomies

By Peter Kemp

BARRY HINES:

*Looks and Smiles*  
219pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95.  
0 7181 1877 4

Early in Barry Hines's new novel, *Looks and Smiles*, an unemployed teenager flicks through a Youth Opportunities leaflet. The headline reads: WHO GOES WHERE? and underneath it, a photograph showed an optimistic-looking group of school-leavers, standing outside a Careers Office. The articles inside the paper were optimistic too, with success stories featured on every page. Contemptuously shredding such flimsily cheerful stuff, Hines's book replaces it with its opposite: not up-beat propaganda, but down-beat propaganda. As predictably dismal as next month's unemployment figures, *Looks and Smiles* is a carefully plotted, depicting parable, spelling out, in block capitals, the inequities and inequities of the recession.

As Hines's last book, *The Price of Coal* showed very clearly, he is a writer who likes to make use of stark, didactic contrasts. There. Public Relations travesty was damningly juxtaposed with the actualities of work. Disgraced, the first half itemized, the "Humpty" surrounding "royal visit to a mine, all signs of dirt and danger being farcically camouflaged. The second half, portraying the aftermath of an explosion in the same pit, let grim realities erupt through the whitewash, with effort now channelled into shovelling rubble from bodies rather than burying fact under burling.

In *Looks and Smiles*, simple oppositions are set up again. The gloomy plights of Mick and Alan, two Northern teenagers, are thrown into relief against the artificial brightness of official hand-outs. After trudging futilely in search of work round their local waste-land of precariously-surviving firms, shuttered shops, dilapidated high-rise flats and bulldozed terraces, the two boys head off in different directions. Alan joins the Army — presented, along with the police, as a rare growth-area in Thatcher's Britain, Mick, staying at home, slumps into

depressed inertia. Seen initially (in a chapter that recalls the school episodes in *Kes*) as healthily anarchic, both degenerate: hard-up Mick takes to petty crime; Alan graduates from his Army training, and a bout of service in Belfast, as a fully-paid-up thug. Boozily stealing cars and breaking noses, sniggeringly brandishing a plastic bullet as a symbol of his prowess, gloating over memories of getting stuck-in in the Bog Side, he makes nervously piffing Mick seem a tame in-abider.

Purposelessness denigrates one of them; regimentation brutalizes the other. Relationships suffer too, as Hines illustrates through the nowhere-to-go affair of Mick and his girl-friend, Karen. Chronically the paralyzed gloominess of this and the humiliating handicaps imposed by lack of money, *Looks and Smiles* obviously aims to be a 1980s version of *Love on the Dole*. Next to Greenwood's novel, though, it looks thin: more of a skeletal frame than a properly fleshed-out fiction. As usual in Hines, dourly indignant sympathy for working-class life is not matched by an ability to reproduce it very compellingly. The dialogue — given a gritty authenticity in the Leach/Garnett adaptations of his novels — tends to be colourless and standardized, never really capturing the vivid, wayward idioms of Northern working-class speech. And this, along with the schematic quality of his fiction, atop the character's ever becoming then on in the past never drops below the level of the characters' lives after the most sensational act discovery of the moment. The plot is perhaps overly energetic, but the light and amusing tone, together with a pleasant Venetian background, keeps one from getting too puffed.

Never one to underestimate his case, Hines heaps up instances of the mess made by public spending cuts until his nose starts to sound like an aggrieved letter to the local council: "The bus service through the estate had been cancelled." Many of the

led", "most of the street lamps had been switched off early as part of the expenditure cut", "the refuse collectors had gone on strike as a protest against further redundancies". The Transport Department had been forced to dismiss half the cleaning staff because of the latest cuts in public expenditure". A book in which a character can't lean across to ask someone the time without noting that he's reading a paper with the headline "GOVT AXE FALLS ON JOB Schemes", *Looks and Smiles*, for all its decency of intent, repeatedly condescends into morose overkill. Never escaping from the doctrinaire and the diagrammatic, it remains at the level of a tract for the times, rather than a novel that involuntarily portrays them.

## In brief

By T. J. Binyon

BEN HEALEY:

*Last Ferry from Lido*  
189pp. Robert Hale. £5.75.  
0 7091 8781 5

Portrait painter Paul Hedley is in Venice, painting a grand old lady of Venetian society. On the Lido he meets an American girl who says she's being followed by a balloon seller, and from then on in the past never drops below the level of the characters' lives after the most sensational act discovery of the moment. The plot is perhaps overly energetic, but the light and amusing tone, together with a pleasant Venetian background, keeps one from getting too puffed.

DONALD MACKENZIE:

*The Last of the Boatriders*  
190pp. Macmillan. £5.50.  
0 333 318137

Forced by investment losses to come out of retirement, aging commandeer Dr Ripley picks up his former partner and plans a final killing on a Caribbean cruise, only to discover that two young men in the same line of business are already working the sea. As carefully planned and neatly put together as Drury's last

## Eternal triangles

By T. J. Binyon

D. S. HIGGINS:

*Rider Haggard: The Great Storyteller*  
266pp. Cassell. £9.95.  
0 304 30827 7

PETER HAINING (Editor):

*The Best Short Stories of Rider Haggard*  
255pp. Michael Joseph. £7.50.  
0 7181 2010 8

In Haggard's late novel, *When the World Shook* (1919), the three heroes, Arbutnot, Bickley and Bastin, shipwrecked on a Pacific island, discover a crystal casket containing the body of Oro, who put himself into a state of suspended animation 250,000 years ago. With the help of a hypodermic syringe filled with a strychnine cocktail, strong black coffee laced with brandy, and concentrated meat extract, they revive him, in gratitude for which he threatens to cause a second flood by changing the course of the immense fiery gyroscope which hums round inside the earth — "God, what an undated and joyous imagination you have," Kipling remarked on reading it.

It almost seems as if D. S. Higgins is at the moment performing the same revivifying service — metaphorically speaking, of course — for Rider Haggard. Last year he published an edition of the author's diaries, and now follows this with a new biography. Of course, Haggard's reputation, unlike Oro's breathing, has never been completely suspended. Peter Haining, in the introduction to his selection of Haggard's short stories, slightly overstates the depth of the oblivion into which it has sunk. Obviously King Solomon's Mines has scarcely lost any vitality since it first appeared in 1885. Almost the same might be said of *Allan Quatermain* and *She*; but it might be slightly surprising to learn that there are nearly twenty of Haggard's novels in print at the present time, including not only the obvious choices, but also such esoteric items as *Mr Meeson's Will* (1888), *The Spirit of Bunbaste* (also known as *Benito*) (1906), and *Wisdom's Daughter* (1923) — Ayesha's autobiography — described by Mr Haining as a "now forgotten and rare novel".

Is a new biography of Haggard really needed, given that we already have the two volumes of the writer's autobiography, *The Days of My Life*, published posthumously in 1926, Lillias Haggard's life of her father, *The Clock that I Left* (1951) and Morton Cohen's biography: *Rider Haggard, His Life and Works* (1960)? Mr Higgins treats some episodes with more, others with less detail than his predecessors; and he has uncovered some new facts. But he has nothing particularly sensational to reveal.

Instead, he offers us a psychological theory. He is not content merely to tell the story of Haggard's life, he also endeavours to explain it. He looks for a reason for the compulsive scribbling, followed by the equally compulsive dedication to public service. He tries to resolve the contradictions of the writer's personality: the contrast, for example, between the bluff, hearty, practical country squire and the self-doubting depressive, obsessed with thoughts of death. "Life is practically behind me, with its many failures and few successes," Haggard wrote in his diary in July 1914, when he was probably the best-known author alive, and a successful public figure as well. Though Mr Higgins's psychological analysis occasionally seems simplistic, and his use of the novels as a source of primary evidence not always judicious, his conclusions, on the whole, are convincing and do much to explain the constant repetition of one or two motifs in Haggard's work.

The most important event in Haggard's life, as Mr Higgins sees it, occurred in 1874, when at the age of eighteen, he was sent to a crammer in London to prepare for the Foreign Office Entrance Examination. He

met, and fell violently in love with, a girl some three years older than himself. In his autobiography he refers to her only as Lilith, and calls her "one of the three really lovely women whom I have seen in my life" (the other two being the Duchess of Leinster and "a village girl at Bridenham who was reported to be the daughter of a gentleman"). His daughter — who must have known most of the story, but left unable to reveal it — more objectively describes her as having "a rather heavy, placid face, blue eyes, and a mass of golden

side trustee of the Jackson fortune. Archer seems to have been an archetypal Victorian bad hat. He kept his family in luxury, but paid for this and for his gambling by embedding the trust money and his clients' funds. When discovered he fled to Africa to avoid arrest, leaving Lilly and the children behind. Haggard found them a new home. Later Lilly followed her husband to Africa, after his death returned to England with an incurable disease, settled in East Anglia near Haggard, and died in 1919.



den-brown, curling hair". The heaviness and placidity are borne out by her photograph, reproduced in Mr Higgins's book. For he has discovered Lilith's identity — Mary Elizabeth (Lilly) Jackson, a Yorkshire heiress — placed together the history of her relationship with Haggard, and sees it — and is undoubtedly right to do so — as the most important in the author's life.

Having unexpectedly obtained a place on the staff of Sir Henry Bulwer, the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor of Natal, Haggard left at short notice for Africa in 1875. He considered himself unofficially engaged, and Lilly promised to wait for him. In the event his stay in Africa was prolonged, and in 1878 he learnt that Lilly had married Francis Archer, a banker and stockbroker,

Mr Higgins has much less to go on in reconstructing Haggard's side of the relationship, but he believes that, as a result of Lilly's marriage, Haggard threw himself into a number of affairs, probably with native women, which he afterwards looked back on with guilt; that his own marriage, in 1880, was very much one of convenience which, with time, became less and less satisfying; that the death in 1891 of his only son Jock while Haggard and his wife were in Mexico was seen as a punishment for earlier transgressions; and that, throughout his life, he loved Lilly, as his daughter writes, with that "affection that transcends all earthly passion and stretches out hands beyond the grave".

The overwhelming importance which the relationship had for him is

amply demonstrated in those early novels set in contemporary English society, when the actual events are nakedly portrayed, almost without any decent fictional veil. More interesting, however, is the way in which its essence is seized upon to become on the one hand a situation, on the other a theme, both of which recur with obsessive constancy throughout Haggard's work.

The situation is that of a man caught between two women: Kallikrates between Amicras and Ayesha, or Leo Vincey between Ursula and Ayesha in *She*; Haggard's Chris between Nyctim and Sorais in *Allan Quatermain*. The opposite situation — two men and one woman — is rare. The theme is that of the enduring, indeed eternal nature of love. For Haggard love exists independently of those who experience it, a view which makes the idea of metempsychosis so important in the novels and such an inevitable constituent of their plots. Even Allan Quatermain turns out to have had several previous existences — as Shabaka, a handsome Egyptian hunter and noble, for example, in *The Ancient Allan*. As Mr-Mee, once Queen of Egypt tells Smith (in a previous incarnation Horn the sculptor) in "Smith and the Pharaohs", one of the stories in this collection: "True love endures immortal as the souls in which it was conceived, and from it for you and me, the night of woe and separation done, at the daybreak which draws on, there shall be born the splendour and the peace of union."

*The Best Short Stories of Rider Haggard* is a slightly odd title for a collection in which, out of twelve pieces, three are non-fiction articles, and two chapters from the novel *Wisdom's Daughter*. They are billed here as two tales which were later incorporated into the novel, but actually (according to the invaluable check list of Haggard's works included in Mr Higgins's biography) are two episodes from his serial publication.

However, the collection redeems itself with two good hunting yarns from Allan Quatermain: "That was the first and last time that I ever killed a brace of lions right and left". Toti bag: five lions, one buffalo at a cost of two native servants. Also enjoyable are two stories of the Zulu War and the battle of Isandhwana, and the editor has done us a service, by printing "The Mahama and the Hare", probably the most peculiar thing he ever wrote: a most un-Haggardian, almost Tolstoyan ferocious polemic against blood sports. "A strangely attractive book," Thomas Hardy called it. It is typical of Haggard that five years later he should begin *The Ivory Child* with an admiring account of a country house shooting match between Allan Quatermain and Van Koop, "a cur of the first water", in which between them they account for 353 pheasants, 27 hares, 6 pigeons, 4 partridges, 3 woodcock and a duck.

## Bridehead revisited

By Lachlan Mackinnon

ROSEMARY SUMNER:

*Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novels*  
216pp. Macmillan. £15.  
0 333 29085 2

This book is a very puzzling concoction. Rosemary Sumner is concerned to show how Hardy's interest in the organization of individual psychology, which she documents and analyses thoroughly, plays itself out subject through the reading of individual characters, and on these she is very good. Her treatment of Sue Bridehead, for instance, is meditative and sympathetic, while her analysis of Michael Hanchard as an aggressive, schizoid type is exemplary. Psychoanalytic critics are rarely so humane or so tactful.

However, while the book is good in its parts (despite the repetitive fitness of its prose), it is vitiated over all by the incoherence of its argument. Hardy was "ahead of his time", we are told, and Dr Sumner wants to show that he anticipated much later psychological work. For example, "Hardy's treatment of Hanchard shows his understanding of many of the characteristics of aggressiveness; some of these were later discovered by Freud; others by Adler; others by psychologists and biologists writing in the second half of the twentieth century."

Freud was willing to concede that insights in literature had preceded his "discoveries", the very naming of the Oedipus complex is such an acknowledgment. How can it possibly make sense to say that Freud "discovered" what Hardy had earlier understood? Only if it is argued that Hardy was an entirely unanalytical, photographic recorder — but analytic powers are exactly what Dr Sumner

grants him. What we face is an argument which lacks historical sense.

Dr Sumner is convincing when she argues that Hardy used "abnormal psyches to subvert conventional ideas of human behaviour, that he was truly a 'problem' novelist. Her sense of the writer's dependence on his cultural circumstances vanishes, on the other hand, when psychologists come on the scene, and the un-historical, unscientific reverence shown for what remain hypotheses leaves the unfortunate impression that these literary descriptions are being used to validate Hardy's characterization. Sumner fails to make it clear why it should interest us that Hardy's and Freud's descriptions are often close (does this, for instance, verify or show as redundant Freud's conceptual baggage?). That the whole notion of "psychology" remains historically ungrounded leaves a lacuna in the work which no amount of close reading can make up.

Patricia Highsmith  
THE  
BLACK HOUSE

Victor Canning  
THE BOY ON  
PLATFORM ONE

Richard Gordon  
DOCTORS'  
DAUGHTERS  
THE PRIVATE  
LIFE OF DOCTOR  
CRIPPEN

Janwillem van de Wetering  
THE MIND  
MURDERS

Anne Melville  
LORIMERS  
IN LOVE

Spencer Dunmore  
ACE

Richard Herley  
THE  
FLINT LORD

Nicolas Freeling  
ONE DAMN  
THING AFTER  
ANOTHER

Heinemann



# The punditry of Mr Dooley

By Roy Foster

GRACE ECKLEY:  
Finley Peter Dunne  
173pp. Boston: Twayne.  
0 8057 295 2

EDWARD J. BANDER:  
The Literary life of a Chicago  
Catholic  
321pp. Charlottesville, Va: Mitche.  
0 87215 329 0

"A subject race is only funny when it's really subject," remarked Finley Peter Dunne through his mouth-piece Mr Dooley in 1907. "About three years ago I stopped laughing at Japanese jokes. . . . The blend of cynicism and liberalism is characteristic: so is the oblique reference to current or recent events, in this case the Russo-Japanese war. But the Irish joke continues unpleasantly to flourish; and the American world Mr Dooley satirized - geriatric politicians, the power of monopoly finance, the manipulation of national issues and international attitudes - would not look very different today from his standpoint in the saloon bar on 'th' Archway Road'. This may be one reason why six books on Dunne and Dooley have appeared or been announced, over the past year. Another explanation lies in the fact that Dunne's Irish-American pundit has maintained an onluring position in the national life; the likelihood is that most people who have taken final-year history in a good American high school have been exposed, often uncomprehendingly, to his 'brogue' (though it is now possible to find a Chicago journalist who has never heard of him - unthinkable even a few years ago).

Like H. L. Mencken, Mr Dooley held the position of an abrasive sage, flaying his devices for their small-mindedness, chauvinism and philistinism; and like Mencken he is not above the occasional expression of such qualities himself (the statement, for instance, that libraries encourage literature as a tombstone encourages life is considerably less clever than it sounds). Again like Mencken, Mr Dooley is not a familiar presence on this side of the Atlantic. Historians of America are an exception, particularly historians of the Spanish-American war; Denis Brogan made perceptive use of Dooley early on, emphasizing that he was not the plain people's oracle, as defined by authorities like Constance Rourke, but an oblique and subversive political commentator. Other exceptions are to be found among analysts of James Joyce, who had embraced Dooley's extraordinary locutions with predictable delight. Otherwise, he is an exotic taste, reflecting different apprehensions of humour. Mark

Twain declared that "the humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French. The humorous story depends for its effect upon the manner of telling, the comic story and the witty story upon the matter". Mr Dooley, as usual, contributes a more pungent observation on the same point. "Hogan says th' difference between an American joke an' an English joke is th' place to laugh. In an American joke ye laugh just after th' point if at al, hut in an English joke ye laugh anytther before th' point or after th' decess of th' joker."

Forty-five years after the demise of Finley Peter Dunne, it is unlikely that either of these books will induce a new audience in English at Mr Dooley. Professor Eckley is serious, painstaking in dating articles, and triumphant in tracking down a "triple entendre"; but her book suffers from its narrow compass, and even within its brief scope there is too much repetition of plain lines, too many inapt analogies with moderns like Mort Sahl. Moreover, too much of her own writing is infelicitous; she is herself capable of a fine neo-Dooleyism in describing the Jameson Raid as a "precipitous" rising, and references to "Orange men" and "the North Ireland question" imply a fundamental uncertainty about some of Dunne's recurring subjects. It is also debatable whether it is necessary to spend pages demolishing the idea that Dunne intended Dooley to be a limited and ignorant crackerbarrel philosopher; to read any one of his monologues on the affairs of the day, in conjunction with what was being currently reported "in th' pa-apars" would soon put paid to that. Where Eckley's book is useful is in filling out the contemporary background and itemizing incidents upon which Dunne built his baroque invocations; but it too rapidly begins to read like a catalogue.

Nearly half Professor Bander's volume has no pretensions to read like anything else, being a chronological listing of Dunne's Mr Dooley essays. Identified by brief quotations and comments, with date and place of publication appended. This is extremely useful to have when reading one of the numerous "Mr Dooley" collections published early this century, where the pieces carry no identification beyond a title, sometimes newly invented by the invisible editor. The rest of Bander's study comprises a good-tempered round-up of Dunne's views on various subjects. Mr Dooley being allowed to do most of the talking; the whole is as unpretentious as both of the eponymous subjects would have liked. Previous collections and commentaries by Barbara Schaff and Louis Filler remain important; Elmer Ellis's 1969 biography is still defini-

tive; the political overtones and influence of Dunne's satire have recently been explored by William Gibson in a detail unanticipated by Eckley and irrelevant to Bander. Their books add to a growing, if minor, industry.

Questions will continue to arise, however, regarding Mr Dooley's longevity - how important was he? how relevant? how funny? The technique deserves examination - not only the atrocious "brogue" which Dunne knew perfectly well approximated to no Irish accent extant, though he called it "Roscommon". (Why, heaven only knew; his own father came from Leix and his mother from Kilkenny.) This conferred uniqueness, if not verisimilitude. Another carefully calculated trick was the supporting cast: Hennessy ("Hinnissy", as Joyce correctly preserved him) is the eternal foil and stooge, directly compared by Dooley himself, in a scathing commentary on Conan Doyle, to Sherlock Holmes's sidekick ("Pass th'loope, Watson"). And Hogan, who never makes a corporal manifestation, serves as the constant reference point for classical and literary allusions ("As Hogan says . . ."); a trick also used to bravura effect by P.G. Wodehouse. Tags and quotations are epigrammatically transmuted ("It's what Father Kelly calls a case of mayhem et chew'em. That's Latin, Hinnissy; an' it means what's wan man's food is another man's pizen"). Proper names are conjured into catch-phrases; the celebrated and pompous are translated into intimates of the lofty barter (as Admiral Dewey became, immortally, "me Cousin George"). Parodic innuendoes occasionally extend into lunatic fantasies, where St Patrick's Day is celebrated on the Twelfth of July, or suffragettes invade the Capitol. But the length and tone of a Dooley piece are always adroitly calculated; when Dooley (or Dunne) becomes embarrassingly serious or sentimental, an oblique enquiry from Hennessy calls him back into line. This formula rarely becomes tedious; significantly, when Dunne essayed other forms, and when he wrote "seriously", the alchemy never worked. Mr Dooley was good to him; the poor Chicago journalist became the rich friend of presidents, and Dunne's private life had far more in common with the world of Edith Wharton than with the bar on the Archway Road. Appropriately enough, he came to be imprisoned by the success of his creation.

It is apposite, too, that Dunne's own career illustrated the American Dream, for Mr Dooley has far more to do with American politics than with Irish consciousness. The patois and the names of his habits may be apparently Irish; there are occasional essays on the Irish question; but even when the English are mocked, it is



"Spring is here, a-sub-puh-ring is here, Life is skittles and life is beer. . . . All the world seems in tune on a spring afternoon. When we're poisoning pigeons in the park." Ronald Searle's scintillating version of what is perhaps Tom Lehrer's most famous song of innocence and infamy is one of half a dozen of his drawings in Too Many Songs by Tom Lehrer with not enough drawings by Ronald Searle, which has just been published (144pp. Eyre Methuen. £9.95. 0 413 48370 6). It contains both words and music of the brilliant series of songs that, as Lehrer says, he wrote "between World Wars II and III"

from an American rather than an Irish-American standpoint. Dunne's own identification with Ireland was self-confessedly tepid. He made fun of the Clan-na-Gael and John Devoy, and Irish-American zealots returned the dislike; resentment of Dunne's use of dialect probably counted for less than Dooley's mockery of nationalist crusades. His really beloved subjects were Theodore Roosevelt, John D. Rockefeller (the kind of a society fr th' previlence of crooty to money), and most of all William Jennings Bryan - preserved for posterity in Mr Dooley's half-affectionate half-contemptuous apostrophes as vividly as in Mencken's famous obituary. It is this turn-of-the-century all-American cast that Dunne, through Dooley, immortalized; it was his cynical lampooning of their causes that carried across the Union.

Nor, obviously, did it stop there. But neither the most often mentioned in connection with him - Artemus Ward and Will Rogers - nor his

# From the visible to the hypothetical

By Stuart Sutherland

RICHARD L. GREGORY:  
Mind in Science  
A History of Explanation in Psychology  
and Physics  
644pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.  
£18.50.  
0 297 77825 0

Richard Gregory is a man of many parts - psychologist, inventor, philosopher, historian and punster. There have been few recent books that can rival *Mind in Science* either in its scope or in its engaging enthusiasm. It provides a history of the physical sciences, of philosophy excluding only ethics, of technology, and of psychology. Within this historical context, Gregory tries to illuminate the nature of mind both through the way it is reflected in man's changing view of the nature of the universe and by applying the latest scientific discoveries to the mind itself.

His theme is not always easy to follow, partly because he cannot resist a good story or a picturesque digression. For example, he interrupts an interesting account of how new properties may emerge from machines to tell us that "on one memorable occasion [I bought] two hundred brasses. Straps, on a laboratory order form, and coated [them] with luminous paint to provide lines of adjustable length, for a visual experiment", and he takes as much delight in Pythagoras's abstinence from beans as in his celebrated theorem. Although he believes that "puns are critically important phenomena, whose neural correlates should be investigated", he confines his own proclivities as a punster to writing a "Pretext" instead of a Preface and to remarking in a discussion of mechanics that the crank and the eccentric are both "delightfully psychological".

One of the more interesting of the many themes running through the book is the importance of current technology in suggesting models of natural phenomena. Gregory argues that it was because the only inanimate force used in Greek technology was a weight on the end of a rope that Aristotle thought antinomically about motion, and suggested that each substance sought out its natural place in the universe. In fact the Greeks also used the pressure of steam to open, on the insertion of an obol, the doors to shrines of the Gods, but the argument stands. Gregory points out that many methods of measurement were developed not for scientific purposes, but in order to ensure fairness in the barter of goods, and he suggests that the attempt to produce bearings as free from friction as possible paved the way for Newton to postulate that bodies continue in uniform motion unless a force is applied. Harvey would probably not have discovered the function of the heart had it not

been for the technological invention of the pump. The existence of mechanical gadgets using negative feedback to maintain a state of equilibrium, such as the governor on a steam engine, has recently suggested new insights into goal-seeking behaviour, and with the invention of the computer we at last have a technological device that may provide a model for human intelligence.

There are many occasions throughout the book on which Gregory moves a puzzle by the application of common sense or an illuminating analogy. It is no use looking at the individual parts of a watch to decide which of them is responsible for telling the time, since it is their interaction that is important. Similarly it is meaningless to ask which part of a bicycle wheel gives it the property of rolling over a smooth surface. If the wheel is broken in half, neither half has this property, but when the two halves are put together a new interface with the environment is created. Gregory expresses surprise that people should resist mechanistic accounts of the mind, given that all machines have a function and can be evaluated by how well they execute it. But here he surely misses the main reason for the objection, which is that the behaviour of machines is fully determined and to treat people as machines appears to conflict with our concept of free will. Freedom of the will is one of the few philosophical issues on which he does not touch.

Although many of Gregory's ideas are not new, they are for the most part well put. Thus, he adopts a sensible solution to the problem of why deduction should apparently supply new knowledge, even though the knowledge is implicit in the premises and the axioms. He argues that because our intelligence is limited a chain of deductions can lead to a conclusion that is surprising and that since the structure of a given branch of mathematics may reflect the structure of aspects of the world, mathematical deduction may reveal new empirical truths.

Gregory is so good-natured that he is anxious to deny the existence of genetically determined differences between the sexes or between different races. He argues with some force that social interaction is so complex that one cannot know what traits would have had survival value in prehistoric times and hence one cannot infer the differential selection of the genes governing these traits, but he does not consider the detailed arguments of the sociobiologists. In our hominid ancestors a woman could only bear a handful of children in a lifetime and was presumably dependent on her mate for providing protection and food, whereas a man could inseminate without cost large numbers of women. It is, therefore, plausible to suggest that men have acquired a genetic predisposition to

be more promiscuous than women, even though it cannot be proved. Moreover, direct support for the genetic determination of a trait can be provided by investigating the physiological factors underlying it, though little evidence of this sort is at present available, except possibly for the rule of testosterone in determining aggression.

In considering intelligence tests, Gregory draws an interesting distinction between potential and kinetic intelligence. Potential intelligence is knowledge that can be applied to the solution of a problem and might even include a knowledge of what rules of inference to apply to a particular problem. Kinetic intelligence is the ability to create a novel solution to a problem, as, for example, by seeing an analogy between that problem and another one that can already be manipulated by potential intelligence. IQ tests claim to measure kinetic intelligence, but it is impossible to separate its contribution from that of potential intelligence, which will be affected by upbringing and is therefore likely to vary between the sexes and between races. There is no way in which a correction can be made for the contribution of potential intelligence without circularity. One example of such circularity is the deliberate equalizing of the average IQ scores of men and women by giving a mixture of verbal texts, on which women on average score more highly, and spatial tests, on which men tend to do better. Gregory's arguments are interesting, but they stray a long way from the evidence. Despite the attempt to equate the average IQ of the sexes, there is more variation in the IQ of men: more men have very high and very low IQs than do women. Moreover, his dismissal of the inheritance of kinetic intelligence as a meaningless question conflicts with evidence from adopted children whose IQ scores correspond more closely to those of their biological parents than to those of their adoptive parents.

So far I have dealt only with some of Gregory's tangential themes. His central thesis is that both perception and science work by the formation of hypotheses. In vision, the mind unconsciously infers from the fragmentary two-dimensional light patterns present on the retina a representation of the environment. That this representation is a hypothesis and subject to error is established by the

presence of visual illusions. Such illusions are more common in the laboratory than in real life, though, as Gregory points out, some observations have detected a hissing sound when the sun sinks into the sea and Arctonidous reported that the setting sun was a hundred times its normal size.

The inferences that underlie everyday perceptions are of great complexity and they all depend on the application of unconscious assumptions. If a two-dimensional picture of an object being rotated is presented on a television screen, the brain infers its exact three-dimensional shape, but underlying this inference is the assumption that in the absence of contrary evidence bodies are rigid: the same retinal pattern could be produced by an infinity of non-rigid objects, but only by a rigid object of one specific three-dimensional shape. A line in the retinal image can be interpreted in many different ways - it may be a convex or concave edge at which two surfaces join, it may be formed by two separate but coplanar surfaces joining one another, it may represent the edge of a body with another body lying behind it, or it may be a change in the reflection of a surface: exactly how a line is interpreted depends on the unconscious application of vast stores of knowledge. The reason why we accept as veridical the hypothetical representation of the world constructed in perception is that it accurately predicts further information received through the senses. The sight of a table top predicts both the noise made if we rap it with our knuckles and the feeling of pressure on the knuckles themselves. Gregory is surely wrong in stating that perceptions are not explanatory. Just as, by analogy with conscious inference, psychologists talk of unconscious inferences in perception, so one could argue that the construction of a perceptual representation of the external world explains the sensations we receive as we move around.

Gregory admits that "There is, unfortunately, no general agreement as to just what hypotheses are, or what characterizes them. This, it must be confessed, is a weakness in our position". He holds that hypotheses "have predictive power, and that they can be suggested by observation and induction, and can be confirmed or refuted, though not in either case with logical necessity". To reach this conclusion, he struggles both with Hume's doubts on the validity of

induction and with Popper's thesis that though hypotheses can be refuted by observation they can never be confirmed and that generalizations cannot be established by repeated observations.

Gregory seems to accept Hume's view that induction cannot be logically justified. It is no use claiming that induction has worked in the past since the inference that it will continue to work in the future is itself an induction. If, however, one makes the minimal assumption that there is some order in the universe, it becomes open to us to discover that order, though we always run the risk of being wrong. That is in the nature both of perception and of scientific hypotheses.

Gregory's lengthy attack on Popper's views on the nature of scientific hypotheses and induction appears to be based on a misunderstanding. Popper does not believe, as Gregory alleges, that no new predictions could be drawn from a scientific hypothesis. Indeed Popper argues that the more predictions that can be drawn and the more precise the predictions, the better the theory, since it makes it easier to refute. Gregory's argument that scientists use Mill's canons to establish the cause of an event by taking observations in varied circumstances is beside the point. Popper argues that no observation can be made until one has a theory or theories to test. Any event is preceded by an indefinite number of other events, and unless one makes a hypothesis about which of these preceding events might be the cause it is quite impossible to know what observations to make or to know how to vary the antecedent circumstances to eliminate some of the possible hypothetical causes. Moreover, Popper is, pace Gregory, fully aware that a single observation does not necessarily refute a theory. It is always open to us to doubt the observation or to modify some of the assumptions used in drawing the prediction whilst retaining the main theory. Popper is careful to distinguish between methodological refutation and logical refutation. The truth of an observation statement denying a prediction drawn from a theory is sufficient to refute the theory, but the observation itself is not. Gregory's attack on Popper is all the more strange since many of Popper's views are similar to his own. Gregory would surely agree that both in science and perception no hypothesis can be known to be correct,

## Information, please

"Information, please" is a service which is available free of charge. Those wishing to use it are asked to follow as closely as possible the form in which items are presented here, and to mark envelopes "Information please".

Ruby Dylon, née Ruby Lindsay (worked as Ruby Lind) (1887-1919): artist and illustrator of children's books. Wife of Will Dylon, of the *Daily Herald*, resident in London 1909-1919, and believed active in feminist affairs, with the Fabians. Information sought about her activities, and those of her associates, during the period when she lived in London.

Carman, College of Vanced Education, PO Box 1, Belmont, Victoria, Australia. 2515.

Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965): any personal recollections, letters, etc; for a biography.

Anne Harvey, Annabel Farjeon, 37 St Stephen's Road, Easing, W13 8HL.

Maury Fitt (1897-1959): writer of detective fiction; pseudonyms of Dr Kathleen Freeman, formerly of Larika Rise, St Mellons, nr Cardiff. Information is sought about any unpublished letters or newspaper articles; personal recollections, particularly welcome, for a biography.

W. D. A. Rowlands, "Trefelin", Heol-yr-Ygol, St Brides Major, Mid-Glamorgan.

Stefano and Agostino Gatti: any information about their management of the Adelphi Theatre, London, between 1879 and 1900, particularly accounts or personal papers, or of the present whereabouts of any descendants; for a study of the Adelphi during this period.

Deirdre Candlin, c/o Department of Drama, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL.

Élievier Gilson (1884-1978), French philosopher: any information on items by or about him not cited in standard sources; for a bibliography.

Margaret McGrath, Kelly Library, St Michael's College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A4.

Captain Sheffield Grace: any information on the present whereabouts of the MS of *The New Zealand Diaries of Captain Sheffield Grace, 63th Light Infantry (1864-66)*.

Alan Klottrup, 37 Oakland Avenue, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 5LD.

George Burton Haygarth: information on his life for research purposes. Dr Haygarth received his medical degree from Glasgow University in 1841, lived in Tasmania until 1845, was guardian at the prison colony in Sydney, and arrived in Chile in 1849. He lived and worked in Bolivia from 1851 to 1877.

Olivia Harris, Department of Anthropology, Goldsmiths' College, New Cross, London SE14 6NW.

Susan Horner (71830-71900): traveller and writer on Italy; information on her family, her dates of birth and death, her contacts in Italy; for an edition of her MS diary at Florence.

Mark Roberts, British Institute of Florence, Lungarno, Guicciardini 9, 50125 Firenze, Italy.

Huguenot source material: letters, diaries, memoirs and any other published or unpublished first-hand sources conveying what it was like to be a Huguenot immigrant to, or a person of Huguenot extraction living in, the British Isles, 1550-1850, other than material in the Huguenot Society Library, University College, London; for a study.

John F. C. Phillips, 92 Rossett Road, London SW12 9RX.

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910): whereabouts of his paintings and drawings, and of manuscript material written by or addressed to the artist, for the catalogue raisonné of his works to be published by Yale University Press.

Judith Bronkhorst, Courtauld Institute of Art, 20 Portman Square, London W1.

Montague Rhodes Jones (1862-1936): for a forthcoming article I would appreciate hearing from anyone with personal or professional experience of Jones during his years at King's College, Cambridge, or Eton. Letters and other memorabilia are of particular interest. Any assistance will be duly acknowledged and credited.

Linda Smith, 33 Worcester St, Boston, Massachusetts 02118.

Eric Kennington, RA (1880-1960): any personal reminiscences and information; any letters learned will be carefully looked after, for a possible future memoir.

Elisabeth Kennington, Eden Cottage, Mays Green, Harpsden, Henley, Oxon. RG9 4AJ.

W. H. James Weale (1832-1917) and his father: personal recollections, for a bibliographical study.

Lori Van Biervliet, Sint-Annael II, 8000 Brugge, Belgium.

More "Information, please" on page 1080.

'A good book is the purest essence of the human soul' — Thomas Carlyle



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Five stories up in a Fulham flat we rarely get it under our thumbs. There's a patch of his ego where the bus stops. Otherwise there's the pack, worn thin, and a smudged horizon of Surrey hills:

but that's a long way off, that's 'the countryside' - massive and ramot. This potful you've bought with begonia's seems more our size - too small to be fought for or buried in.

A portable forest ablaze with leaves. How generous yet modest this god-stuff! (The way it blides undecall it gives.) This was our flesh before the gods breathed on us: Adam and Eve to a plastic dish.

Peter Bland



though at any one time it may be rational to prefer it to any other existing hypothesis formation. He wrote: "The tentative solutions which animals and plants incorporate into their anatomy and their behaviour are biological analogues of theories and vice versa".

Although Gregory does not explicitly make the point, our perceptual systems operate on the implicit assumption that the stimulus array is not the result of chance. An outline drawing of a cube could be the planar projection of an infinity of shapes, including both a vast variety of irregular six-sided solids and also shapes whose hidden parts contain an indefinite number of surfaces. In perception, the implicit assumption is made that it is unlikely that an irregular shape is being viewed from just that point of view that would yield an image consistent with the shape being a cube, and although the assumption may prove wrong (as when one sees the distorted Ames room as a normal room with rectangular sides at right angles to one another), it is usually correct.

Although Gregory argues the case well, the idea that both scientific theorizing and perception proceed by hypothesis formation is hardly new. Moreover, when he tries to push the parallel further, he does not seem to shed new light on either. Just as we perceive a scene in the most symmetrical way consistent with the image on the retina, so scientific theory is often guided by considerations of symmetry. The periodic table of the elements discovered by Mendeleev was guided by the search for sym-

metry and so were the more recent discoveries of subatomic particles. Among other similarities between scientific procedures and perception, Gregory instances interpolation across gaps in the data: it is customary to connect a set of readings on a graph by a smooth line on which it is assumed other readings will fall, just as in perception we assume that the parts of a cow hidden by a picket fence are physically present. Gregory compares the ambiguity of a Necker cube with ambiguity in scientific theorizing: are quasars astronomical objects close but so large that they produce through gravitational red-shift in their spectral lines, or are they very distant but of enormous brightness? This analogy seems unhelpful since the Necker cube is intrinsically ambiguous, whereas one hopes that further evidence will remove the ambiguity about the status of quasars. Although it is fun to compare the misinterpretations of scientific senses (as when a hot water and the other is cold, lukewarm water appears cold to one hand and hot to the other), the analogy does not seem to throw any additional light on either form of misinterpretation.

Among other difficult questions confronted by Gregory is that of the mind-body problem. But his account is no more satisfactory than previous attempts at a solution. Although he may be right to reject dualism, his reasons for doing so are obscure. He points out that if someone accidentally places their hand in scalding water, the hand is reflexively withdrawn



before the pain is felt, and he suggests that this implies that consciousness has no influence on behaviour. There are so many other situations in which we act only after conscious reflection that drawing attention to a reflex action carried out before we are conscious of what has happened seems curiously irrelevant. He also argues that in carrying out a skilled activity we often only become conscious of what is going on when something unexpected occurs or when we make a mistake. But again this seems to have no relevance to the causal role, if any, of consciousness. He is surely wrong in thinking that we are only conscious of the unexpected. One can be only too conscious of the expected ending of

a banal film or novel. The main argument against assuming a causal role for a non-corporeal entity, consciousness, is surely that it is difficult to conceive of the matter in the brain not obeying the laws of physics and chemistry, and since any change in consciousness can be evinced in motor activity, itself determined by the nervous system, to ascribe a causal role to consciousness implies that the matter in our heads is not obeying physical laws. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle is of no help since the randomness inherent in the behaviour of electrons could only result in random behaviour and most human behaviour is only too predictable, even, or perhaps particularly, when it is guided by conscious deliberation.

The solution for which Gregory opts is a form of mind-brain identity. He suggests that both mind and brain have identical meanings where the meaning of the activity of the brain is the state of affairs symbolized by its current activity. He realizes that this hardly solves the problem, since far more is represented in the brain than appears in consciousness and there is a sense in which the elements of a computer programmed to act intelligently can be said to represent external states of affairs. Gregory indeed suggests that if a computer performed in a way significantly superior to a programmer's expectations, one would be tempted to ascribe consciousness to it, though many in such circumstances might be more tempted to go back to the drawing-board, or rather to re-examine their program.

Although Richard Gregory has not solved all the problems he tackles, he gives a vigorous, enthusiastic and for the most part clear account of man's efforts to understand himself and the physical universe and the relation between the two. *Mind in Science* is enlivened by his capacity for drawing illuminating analogies and for making connections between ideas generated in different historical epochs. The impact of his engaging personality appears on every page. It is as though Herodotus had chosen to rewrite the works of Aristotle.

less investigation, with her colleagues, of an unorthodox theory concerning iron metabolism and Hodgkin's disease.

Dr Goodfield gives an excellent account of that investigation, with all its failures and successes, the tedium of its repeated experiments, and the unending struggle against scepticism. Science is exactly like this, although the dialogue in most research laboratories may lack the ardour, the breathlessness, and the historic outbursts that seem to have been commonplace in Dr Brito's milieu. Science, in the whole, is a fairly messy business, far from the cold, orderly summary which constitutes a scientific paper as it appears in one of the dozens of scientific journals. Interesting discoveries are very often made by chance, or by the operation of what Max Delbrück called the Principle of Limited Sleepiness. There follows agonizing about the reality of the discovery, then doubt concerning its interest and significance, then anxiety about its publication, since editors send the manuscript to referees, who may sometimes be stupid or prejudiced. The observation eventually enters the consciousness of other scientists working in the same field, and may catalyse the formulation of a theory, such as Dr Brito's about the nature of Hodgkin's disease. Her theory is both falsifiable and verifiable; if it turns out to be true, Hodgkin's disease will be explained and all kinds of changes will ensue in the thought patterns of cancer-research workers. However, since this is biology, no conclusions will emerge about the nature of the world in general — conclusions of that kind belong to a different realm, in fact, to physics.

All these things are dramatized in this excellent book, which, also makes it clear why a certain kind of individual is drawn to participate in the strange form of biological activity called scientific research. Philosophers of science, whether professional or amateur, should have *An Imagined World* in their libraries. It need all the help that they can get for the philosophy of science is not an irrelevant unwelcome activity. Scientists were killed in Russia because their definition of science differed from that of Lysenko and Stalin; and in the United States the so-called Creationists may succeed in preventing the teaching of the theory of evolution in schools because of Popper's misgivings about the scientific character of the theory of natural selection.

## HISTORY

H. I. DUTTON and J. E. KING:  
Ten Per Cent and No Surrender  
The Preston Strike, 1853-54.  
274pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£18.50.  
0 521 23620 7

Cotton was the first and for long the greatest symbol of the Industrial Revolution. Lancashire was a place of pilgrimage for foreign observers and the capitalist system as described by Marx is in fact merely the Lancashire textile industry writ large. Schoolchildren are still taught primarily about textile machinery when they begin to study economic history. One aspect of the cotton industry has made little impact on popular knowledge. The Plug riots which accompanied the revival of Chartism in 1842 are remembered. Otherwise there are few of the dramatic recollections associated for example with the coal industry. Perhaps there were fewer dramas. Also, a decisive factor in the history of the cotton trade, there was never a unified industry until late in the nineteenth century. Cotton's history has to be told in terms of separate towns and even villages, to say nothing of separate crafts.

This is nowhere better illustrated than in the history of the virtually general strike in Preston which closed the mills for seven months during 1853 and 1854. This attracted general interest at the time. Lord Palmerston, then briefly at the Home Office, addressed to the strikers a long essay on the errors of their ways. Both Dickens and Mrs Gaskell journeyed to Preston in order to gather material for their next novels. After the strike had been defeated it was forgotten — not mentioned even by the Webbs. It has been brought back to life only when two lecturers at Lancaster University unearthed two scrapbooks of the time, one kept by Henry Ashworth, the hardest of the Preston cotton-masters, the other probably by George Cowell, the leading orator and tactician among the Preston weavers. Add to this that Preston boasted three weekly newspapers of its own, all three of high quality and one remarkably sympathetic to the strikers. The two authors themselves understand both Lancashire, including its dialect, and the cotton trade. The result is a book of great fascination and careful scholarship.

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By A. J. P. Taylor

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## The laboratory life

By J. F. Watkins

JUNE GOODFIELD:  
An Imagined World  
A Story of Scientific Discovery  
240pp. Hutchinson. £8.95.  
0 09 145480 8

Philosophers of science are confronted by a dilemma which they cheerfully sidestep: how can science be defined without first observing it in action, and how can we know we are observing science without a pre-existing definition? They slip past the dilemma by declaring that science is physics. Newton, Boyle, Maxwell, Bohr, Planck, Einstein, and so on, were scientists, and what they did is deemed science. Satisfying definitions then emerge. Karl Popper's for example, science requires the formulation of falsifiable hypotheses which are tested by experiment. We can never prove that a hypothesis is true, only that it is false.

Two problems arise from this kind of definition. The first concerns the status of biology. Some philosophers say that biology is natural history, although it may possibly be scientific if faced with physics and chemistry. Popper, after wrestling with Darwinism, concluded that the "doctrine of natural selection is a most successful metaphysical research programme".

There is clearly great hesitation among philosophers about awarding the title "scientist" to biologists. This does not worry biologists too much — they simply declare that they are scientists, just as Napoleon declared he was an Emperor. For all that, there is obviously a qualitative difference between, say, the experimental demonstration that lymphocytes in rats and mice continually recirculate and Bohr's model of the atom, or the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The second problem is that scientists do not, in fact, strive to falsify hypotheses. The proposition, "DNA is a double helix", for example, is true, and only a fool would devote valuable time to attempts to falsify it. Even a fool would need to be galvanized by irrational stimuli such as personal malice against Watson or Crick before embarking on his crusade.

Dr Goodfield wanted to know how individuality is expressed in scientific creation and decided, forthrightly, to "move into the laboratory to observe and try to penetrate the mind of the scientist". Her credentials were sound, in that she was trained as a zoologist and had studied the history and philosophy of science for twenty years. She captured her scientist by chance at a dinner party in New York, where one of the guests was a Portuguese woman immunologist who had come from Glasgow Uni-

versity to work in America. In this book the immunologist is called "Anna Brito". She must be a brave and humorous woman, because it is easy to establish her true identity, and some members of the scientific community, conditioned to make that sort of judgment, will not be slow to accuse her of self-aggrandizement. The charge would be totally unwarranted. In the first place her research is sufficiently well regarded for her not to need to acquire visibility in this way. In the second place she was not a passive object of Dr Goodfield's contemplation. Her own contribution to the book is considerable, in the form of letters, tape-recordings, lengthy replies to questions, and the instruction of immunology. It appears to be an emotional, ardent, valuable woman, who is deeply interested in questions concerning the fundamental nature of her work. She loves music (even Stockhausen and Cage) and the poems of Pablo Neruda, and herself writes poetry, none of which, unfortunately, is printed here. She is an ideal subject, in short, for the sort of investigation Dr Goodfield wanted to undertake. An articulate, introverted scientist would have been useless.

Nevertheless, there are moments when the more cynical reader must be at the price to be paid for the usefulness of Dr Brito's uninhibited flow of rhetoric. My own strongest wincing was provoked by the statement (in refutation of Kunt) that "science... is like the difference between rape and making love", and by the suggestion that the development of a concept is "the only time when a man can experience anything like giving birth". I have never knowingly experienced either of these sensations when at work in my own laboratory. Dr Goodfield herself is not unemotional, and some of the reported conversations between the two women (where whole paragraphs of speech are given verbatim) are terribly intense, even, at times, dangerously close to gush.

How did Dr Goodfield recognize that Dr Brito was a scientist? Philosophical definitions of science were not invoked. It appears that Dr Brito is to be called a scientist because she wears a white coat, performs experiments in a laboratory, in a large institution inhabited by people who call themselves scientists, and publishes her observations in learned journals and international meetings. These observations contribute to the subject of immunology, which is generally agreed to be a scientific

subject. The aim of the science of immunology is to produce a total description of the mechanism by which certain cells, chiefly lymphocytes, produce a response against the presence in the body of unfamiliar ("non-self") molecules, and sometimes, pathologically, against the body's own molecules. In other words, Dr Brito is to be considered a scientist because her colleagues and the world in general agree that she is a scientist, and not a natural historian. The philosophy of science, then, must start by examining precisely what it is that Dr Brito, and thousands like her, are doing in their laboratories. This is why *An Imagined World* is a valuable book, because all scientists, whatever their own interests may be, will recognize the accuracy of its account of the daily activities of working experimentalists.

It is worth describing Dr Brito's first scientific discovery, because it calls into question the theory that a "prepared mind" is required before new observations can be made. She arrived from Portugal to work for a year in a respected immunology research department in London as a recently qualified doctor with a poor knowledge of English, a smattering of immunology, and virtually no scientific training. Her mind was as unprepared as it could be. In desperation the head of the department gave her a few boxes of old histological slides of mouse spleens and a microscope, and banished her to a corner to examine them. Several months later she had discovered, simply by looking, that a certain type of lymphocyte, called a T-cell because it matures in the thymus, goes to populate, with great specificity, certain defined areas in the spleen.

Standing alone this observation is of no great significance. Viewed against a wider background, however, it is very important because it is an example of the directed migration of cells, a phenomenon seen in the development of the embryo. An understanding of why T-lymphocytes migrate to certain areas of the spleen could illuminate the greater problem of morphogenesis. In relation to immunology it will become, like a stone in a mosaic, part of the total description which is the aim of that science. For Dr Brito it meant even just appointment as a lecturer in post in charge of a research team in an American research institute, in which all her subsequent scientific thinking grew, culminating in the re-

less investigation, with her colleagues, of an unorthodox theory concerning iron metabolism and Hodgkin's disease.

Dr Goodfield gives an excellent account of that investigation, with all its failures and successes, the tedium of its repeated experiments, and the unending struggle against scepticism. Science is exactly like this, although the dialogue in most research laboratories may lack the ardour, the breathlessness, and the historic outbursts that seem to have been commonplace in Dr Brito's milieu. Science, in the whole, is a fairly messy business, far from the cold, orderly summary which constitutes a scientific paper as it appears in one of the dozens of scientific journals. Interesting discoveries are very often made by chance, or by the operation of what Max Delbrück called the Principle of Limited Sleepiness. There follows agonizing about the reality of the discovery, then doubt concerning its interest and significance, then anxiety about its publication, since editors send the manuscript to referees, who may sometimes be stupid or prejudiced. The observation eventually enters the consciousness of other scientists working in the same field, and may catalyse the formulation of a theory, such as Dr Brito's about the nature of Hodgkin's disease. Her theory is both falsifiable and verifiable; if it turns out to be true, Hodgkin's disease will be explained and all kinds of changes will ensue in the thought patterns of cancer-research workers. However, since this is biology, no conclusions will emerge about the nature of the world in general — conclusions of that kind belong to a different realm, in fact, to physics.

All these things are dramatized in this excellent book, which, also makes it clear why a certain kind of individual is drawn to participate in the strange form of biological activity called scientific research. Philosophers of science, whether professional or amateur, should have *An Imagined World* in their libraries. It need all the help that they can get for the philosophy of science is not an irrelevant unwelcome activity. Scientists were killed in Russia because their definition of science differed from that of Lysenko and Stalin; and in the United States the so-called Creationists may succeed in preventing the teaching of the theory of evolution in schools because of Popper's misgivings about the scientific character of the theory of natural selection.

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# TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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# TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

THE WORLD'S FOREMOST LITERARY WEEKLY

## remainders

BY ERIC KORN

A milestone in the rare-book caper was *New Paths in Book-Collecting* (1934), a collection of essays edited by John Carter which might without too much impropriety be subtitled "new ways of getting the Johns to spend their money on previously unsellable old fat". Seeing that the number of customers who could be made happy and poor was limited by the number of Shakespeare Quartos, Keats poems and Aldines available, Carter quite properly drew attention to the possibility of collecting detective stories, yellow books, the history of science, almanacs and so forth.

Creative collectors today still try to discover or invent areas where impressive coverage can be bought cheaply. (second editions of Touchstones, municipal bus timetables); creative dealers try to get there ahead of them. In consequence it's increasingly difficult to find paths that aren't already signposted, metalled, and carrying heavy traffic. So this year's Carter memorial award for innovative cataloguing must go to Peter Bell and Christopher Johnson's *British Biography 1800-1920* for presenting an undoubted contribution to scholarship with a degree of commercial shrewdness.

The subjects would populate a small town (1,200 just from A-G). They are folks who were alive at some time in the nineteenth century (Mary Wollstonecraft has been slipped in as a desirable alien) and who were written about before 1920. So that as well as being a compendium of sources, it is also a record of the range and character of the Victorian-Edwardian biographic mode, from Sir Henry Bessemer, steel manufacturer, to Davidson, *Intelligence*; and from Sir William Henry Flower, late director of the Natural History Museum to Cook, Annie Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Cook, travel agent, gassed in *baile*.

In fact it is probably more use in general than in particular, because a researcher who wants data on (say) John Briggs, late editor of the *Westmorland Gazette*, probably already has the memoir published in Kirkby Lensdale in 1825, and if he is researching on some other editor of the *Westmorland Gazette* he may look here in vain: whereas an Institute of Biographical Studies would be well advised to buy the whole lot and let the statisticians loose on it. My own crude statistics suggest that the topics are 40 per cent religious, 10 per cent each political, judicial, scholarly, military, and artistic, 4½ per cent sporting, 4½ educational, with the odd one in a hundred like "stammerer". "English Lady married to Sheriff of Wigan", and "keeper of asylum for fallen women and gypsies".

The beauty of all this is that though many of the books are individually rare (10-15 per cent not in the British Library), such rarities are collectively not uncommon. And while the average price of the books - about £20, with many in single figures, and nothing over £50 - is trifling compared to most antiquarian catalogues (and about the price of a newly published biographic title), they must have been quite a lot cheaper when found by ones and twos in the obscure back-hauled top shelves of deep provincial bookstores. But just as putting together several thousand Lives of not very interesting people creates a mass-biography of great fascination, so putting together a lot of not very valuable books collectively creates a context of value. And that's creative book-selling.

I've been reading *A Life of Oscar Wilde* (and his mother) by Anna de Brémont, who has theories that wouldn't be gone a bundle on by the more ardent feminists. She reckons that successful women are successful because they have "a masculine soul" in a feminine brain-building; and this goes for all heroic women back to "Mother Eve herself, braving the tempter and courageously shielding the father of our race from the vengeance of the

Almighty", which isn't the way I remember it. Oscar Wilde, of course, was a feminine soul in a masculine brain-building, which accounts for all his troubles.

And Oscar Wilde's mother (in great soul too) reversing the normal rules of psychoanalytic causality (and no bad thing either), knew instinctively that her child was a feminine soul even before it was born, so naturally she wished he had been born a girl, and often told him so.

Another man who lays a lot of stress on trifling gender differences is Fabius Zachary Snoep, author of *From the Menorah to the Madonna: A Study of the Breast in Culture and Religion* (Jan Bale and Danielson, 1978). This is little more than an anthology of mammary references from "let me to thy bosom fly" to "Ravished in that fair Via Lactea", with droll commentary. The content, which I will not describe as anything other than tickling prurience, is unmemorable, but the author's name deserves to be recorded. If it is a pseudonym the usual sources don't know it, though the initials FZ seem facetious. Anna, Comtesse de Brémont, by the way, isn't a pseudonym either: she was the author of *Lady Lilian's Luck*, a *Remembrance of Ostend*, *Daughters of Pleasure*, *Coronation Sonnets to her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Mary*, and *A Son of Africa*, later retitled *Was it a Sin?* and bound up with *The Metamorphosis of Helen* by Winifred Boggs.

But one unlikely name that is indeed pseudonymous is Gervase Barone, who belongs in the Reviewer's Hall of Fame for her remark - *of Mel Knapp* - that "it lacks tact, but is filled with Hitler's abounding vitality and fascination". This is to be found in *You Have Lived Before!* (1936), a handbook to reincarnation (Greta Garbo was a Florentine nun, Amy Mellison was a friend of Marco Polo, Cleopatra is now living in New York and seventy years old). It's a relief to learn that Ms Barone can find no evidence that Mussolini was either Augustus or Napoleon; particularly because Napoleon is someone else altogether, a young Russian lad, the son of an OGPU officer and an anarchist guide, born in 1921, who will become a world ruler by 1946. Miss Gervase Barone, as I said, is a pseudonym. Her real name was Miss Gervase Baronti, though she later became (and serve her right) Mrs Breckinridge, and more briefly, Arthur Miles, for the purposes of her Indian travel-book, *The Land of the Lingam* (with Plates).

On a pleasant July day in 193, Geoffrey Pellett, a New Zealander of small fame but great energy, sat off from Hershams in S-shire ("S-X" would be more precise, but misleading) with a rucksack full of his own poetry in broadsheet (St Dominic's Press) and a pedlar's licence from the local constabulary. For the rest of the summer he tramped the English countryside, hawking his rhyme-sheets - sixpence a time or thruppence for typesets - at the doors of the obscure and the then famous, from Belloc at Shipley Mill to Chesterton in the Chilterns, by way of Laurence Housman in Somerset ("You aren't confusing me with my brothers, are you?") Winifred Holtby (Dawn) and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (Cornwall), by way of Ethel M. Dell and Margaret Woods, through Beatrice Chase, Rutland Boughton and Warwick Deering. Five hundred miles later he had earned and acquired, as well as blisters and a tao and a verse-set autographed by all his eminent clients (what is it now?), the material for a waywardly pleasing memoir, *Song for de Longmans*, 1936; woodcuts by Florence Green. The book - like his poetry - is decent but a little too cheerful and discreet.

No one seems to have been vile to him, though various anonymous gentlefolks or their servants were abrupt. Clergy and squires were the worst, but usually cold ("We shan't be needing any today, thank you"), rather than abusive: one man who shouted at him got a stiff little note of protest the next day. E. M. Delafield sent the curious message that she was "no good at that sort of thing"; A. G. Street declined to help on the grounds that he was just a farmer ("Reckon his beaks must be better than his farming", said a sceptical neighbour); but most professionals seem to have been more about Ruskin in Venice, and reading *Ruskin and Venice* one cannot wait to read *The Stones*. Brought up to exorcise Ruskin for having, supposedly, done so much harm to English architecture, I did not read a word of his until I was over fifty. So ignorant of him was I that when I went to Venice in 1946 with instructions not to miss the tomb of the Doge Andrea Vendramin in the church of SS Giovanni e Paolo, which Ruskin had pronounced a perfect example of the true spirit of the Renaissance, I gazed at it unable to understand what was so specially beautiful about it. It was not until I read J. G. Links's 1960 *Rebirth of the Stones*, my first introduction to Ruskin, that I learnt that the Renaissance to Ruskin was a "pestilential art" and that Vendramin's tomb was the epitome of its baseness in that only the visible side of the Doge's figure was carved, whereas in the earlier Gothic tomb of the Doge Tommaso Mocenigo next to it, the hidden side, the side God sees, was as carefully sculpted as the visible side. Both these tombs are illustrated in Jan Morris's abridgement of the 450,000-word original.

This is a lovely hook to handle, beautifully produced, with twenty-five colour plates, old and new photographs and innumerable drawings. Miss Morris's introduction is written with her usual magic. I can think of no other author whose prose would not seem dim after Ruskin's. When commenting on that glorious chapter, "The Nature of Gothic", she writes of the Gothic style:

It could tolerate mistakes, roughness, asymmetries, because it was derived strictly from nature, which detested a straight line as it abhorred a vacuum. It had none of the servile perfection of the neo-classical. It was ornamented not with urns, but with fauna and flora. It was an architecture rude and wild, tinged with humour, joyful, spontaneous, strong, and never afraid of superfluity. ... The *Stones of Venice* is itself a paradigm of its vision - a mighty Gothic structure itself, obeying Ruskin's own rules with scrupulous splendour. For it too is, as he would say, rude and wild of character - a soaring, profuse, tangled book, whose shape must be worried out from the spectacular richness of it all. It too scorns symmetry and unnecessary perfections.

Jan Morris milots a useful new noun in the word "muffle" which she uses to describe the empires of Europe in 1848 as "lying like great upholstered muffles across the body of Europe". Jeanne Clegg's book has a number of scholarship over it - thirty-three pages of source notes, for instance, to 193 of text (how helpful it would be if authors would key their notes to page numbers as well as to chapters), but it will be invaluable to all Venice-lovers and invaluable to anyone interested in Ruskin. It starts with an admirable survey of "The English View of Venice before Ruskin", then covers his travels there to separate sections. One might expect mere illustrations for the price, but those that there are, are extremely well chosen. They include some fascinating old photographs and a particularly interesting drawing of the church of San Girolamo, turned into a steam bath mill in 1842 and shown with black smoke pouring from its bell-

JOHN RUSKIN:  
*The Stones of Venice*  
Abridged and edited by Jan Morris  
239pp. Faber. £12.50.  
0 571 11815 1

JEANNE CLEGG:  
*Ruskin and Venice*  
233pp. Junction Books. £12.50.  
0 85245 019 5

What a fortunate coincidence that these books have been published so close together, for in reading *The Stones of Venice* one longs to know more about Ruskin in Venice, and reading *Ruskin and Venice* one cannot wait to read *The Stones*. Brought up to exorcise Ruskin for having, supposedly, done so much harm to English architecture, I did not read a word of his until I was over fifty. So ignorant of him was I that when I went to Venice in 1946 with instructions not to miss the tomb of the Doge Andrea Vendramin in the church of SS Giovanni e Paolo, which Ruskin had pronounced a perfect example of the true spirit of the Renaissance, I gazed at it unable to understand what was so specially beautiful about it. It was not until I read J. G. Links's 1960 *Rebirth of the Stones*, my first introduction to Ruskin, that I learnt that the Renaissance to Ruskin was a "pestilential art" and that Vendramin's tomb was the epitome of its baseness in that only the visible side of the Doge's figure was carved, whereas in the earlier Gothic tomb of the Doge Tommaso Mocenigo next to it, the hidden side, the side God sees, was as carefully sculpted as the visible side. Both these tombs are illustrated in Jan Morris's abridgement of the 450,000-word original.

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freyc chimney - the first sight to greet the traveller on arriving in Venice, as described by Ruskin at the end of the first volume of *The Stones*.  
Ruskin was sixteen when he first went to Venice with his parents in the autumn of 1835, and he fell in love with it, recalling the visit in *Præterita* as one of "pure childish passion of pleasure". They stayed only a fortnight but he promised his diary "to make such a drawing of the Ducal Palace as never had been made before". When he was there for the second time, for a month in May 1841, again with his parents, he was in melancholy mood after an unhappy love affair which had affected his health that he had been obliged to take time off from Oxford. Nevertheless, on his first night he was writing in his diary, "Thank God I am here! It is the Paradise of cities... I am happier than I have been these five years - so happy - happier than in all probability I ever shall be again".  
When he returned to Venice four years later it was for the purpose of writing the second volume of *Modern Painters*, and he went alone this time with his servant George Hebbes. He had not reckoned with the changes he was to find in the city. The railway bridge across the lagoon, near completion, blocked the view of Venice from Mestre; there were gas lamps on both sides of the Grand Canal and in the Piazzas, and other "fearful changes" as well as destruction of buildings going on everywhere. "They are scraping St Mark's clean", he wrote in his father, "Off go all the glorious old weather stains, the rich hues of marble which nature, mighty as she is, has taken ten centuries to bestow". Fortunately he never knew of plans proposed the following year to extend the Riva degli Schiavoni seventy metres outwards to allow for the building of "a gigantic complex of hotel, theatre, cafés, baths and other facilities", to continue the railway to San Gerolamo Maggiore and to throw a bridge across to the Piazzetta. It was during this visit that Ruskin "discovered" Tintoretto, whose greatness "crushed" him. In May the following year he was there again - for the last time with his parents.

Revolution in Europe prevented Ruskin from taking his wife Effie to Venice directly after their marriage in April 1848 as had been his intention, but soon after the Venetians capitulated to the Austrians in August 1849, they set out, arriving in the middle of November to spend eight months at the Danelli Hotel which Ruskin had always stayed before. (Jan Morris is mistaken, by the way, in saying that the railway bridge had been repaired after the Austrian bombardment by the time they arrived. It was because the train from Mestre was not running that soon after their arrival one of the carriages of a visiting German prince and his wife tumbled into the lagoon and was submerged for five hours. Seeing it drying out on the quay afterwards was a "melancholy sight" to Effie.) Having already turned his attention to painting the architecture (*The Seven Lamps of Architecture* had been published earlier in 1849), Ruskin was bent on preserving in prose, drawings and daguerotypes all he could of the stones of Venice before they crumbled away. He spent his days copying, measuring, making endless notes, lying full length on the marble floor of St Mark's or balanced on the tops of ladders examining sculptural details.

Jeanne Clegg gives a masterly analysis of *The Stones*, pointing out all Ruskin's inconsistencies and contradictions. He cared no more for consistency than for symmetry, writing eagerly, "I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly until I have contradicted myself at least three times".  
During the two long sojourns in Venice with Effie, Ruskin appears for the most part in Jeanne Clegg's pages as art critic, theorist and stern

## The joys of superfluity

By Mary Lutyens

He would not have dared tell his parents that he was enjoying himself. He bewailed his long absences and only commenced them on the understanding that he was working diligently on his book, eschewing all frivolity. While fulminating against the filth and vice of the Venetians, the appalling destruction of the buildings and the vacuous boredom of society, he was in truth very happy. Effie suited him, for she found her own amusements and left him in peace to follow his own pursuits. If it had not been for her he might never have met Rowland Brown who was to help him so much with his Venetian work: Brown was her friend, captivated by her. Jeanne Clegg does not show us those little glimpses of Ruskin at play as seen in Effie's letters home. They had "famous fun and laughter" ever their morning ball games to keep warm in the hotel, we see Ruskin "jumping with delight and executing a feat (that Tagliani [the ballet dancer living in Venice] would have stared her widest at)", catching crabs at the Lido, together with Effie's Austrian adorer Lieutenant Paulizza whom Ruskin admired for his beautiful drawings, and racing them along the sands, and "setting large empty shells to sail on the sea", and at a champagne picnic at Torcello, again with Paulizza: "Nothing could be merrier than the two men. After dinner, to show that the champagne had not gone to their heads, they ran races round the old buildings and so fast that one could hardly see them". And in 1852, during their second visit, they hired dominoes and masks and went "masking" in the streets while the Carnival was on. Effie laughed so much that she could "scarcely go on" while Ruskin "who was as grave as possible, did the thing capriciously".

Among much new material quoted by Jeanne Clegg are some fascinating letters from John James Ruskin to his son during this second visit. Mr Ruskin had not approved of the first volume of *The Stones*, except for the first and last chapters, nor had the publisher. It had appeared in 1851 and was selling badly. "No technical works are popular or sell", Mr Ruskin wrote to his son. "I can see one of the public quite comprehend this - Your powers of writing are so fine that we grudge to have them cabined, cribbed, confined - We want you, pen in hand not Trowel". (Jan Morris evidently agrees with Mr Ruskin for she has omitted most of the first volume, a lovable de-it-yourself building treatise.) Mr Ruskin hoped that the second volume would make up for the first. His son had a marvellous ability to "draw sermons out of stones". With the addition of "some Turner gleams of Venice to be given to your word painting - It will give a book indeed". It is to Mr Ruskin, then, that we owe the "Turner gleam" in those marvellous word paintings of the first approach to Venice and the first sight of St Mark's.

Ruskin did not return to Venice again until 1869. His marriage had been annulled in 1854 and ten years later his father had died. He was now besotted with a young girl, Rose La Touche. He stayed at Verona but visited Venice four times for a few days at a time. It was only now that he became aware of Carpaccio, who came to mean so much to him; he wrote to Burne-Jones, "There's nothing like Carpaccio... I don't give up my Tintoret". But this Carpaccio is a new world to me. He had not found Venice so beautiful since he was a boy. He was at Verona still when he heard that he had been offered the Slade Professorship at Oxford.

The following spring he was in Venice again for a month, principally in order to show this city to his cousin, Joan Agnew, and to some old friends. And he was there again for three weeks in the summer of 1872 at a time when he was decidedly unhappy. Rose was very ill and her parents had forbidden them

to meet or correspond. In January 1871 he had started writing his monthly pamphlets *Fori Clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*, and in June was writing Letter 19 from Venice complaining that he could not write that "morning because of the accursed whistling of the daily steam engine of the omnibus for the Lido". This passage was sent by a reader from Wales to an Italian paper and caused much resentment amongst the Venetians.

When Ruskin was again in Venice for his long penultimate visit of eight months in 1876-77, Rose and his mother were both dead and he was desperately lonely. With nobody really in love or to love him he looked for and found signs from Rose, whom he had associated with St Ursula in Carpaccio's picture of the saint lying in bed dreaming. These signs and symbols brought him to a mad ecstasy followed by depression. He stayed during this visit in two cheap rooms on the Zattere, now the Pensione Calcina, where he was able to chop wood for his fire on the quay. The Calcina is the only place in Venice which bears a commemorative plaque to him. The Danelli, where he had stayed on all his previous visits, except the second with Effie, has failed to put one up, although there is a plaque to George Sand and Alfred de Musset in room No 10.

While he was at the Calcina Ruskin wrote a didactic *Guide to the Principal Pictures in the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice* in which he made the sensible suggestion that visitors should be charged a fee before entering the city. He also wrote *St Mark's Rest: The History of Venice Written for the Help of the Few Travellers Who Still Care for her*

*Moments*. Jeanne Clegg expertly dissects this book, as well as the *Guide*; she calls it "as pilgrim's guide in Venice, to the tombs of her good men, the images of her saints, her 'relics and old bones'".

As of everything, Ruskin had his own eccentric view of history. He had advised his Oxford students that "in the reading of history your first purpose must be to seek what is to be praised, and disdain all the rest; and in doing so, remember always that the most important part of the history of man is that of his imagination. What he actually does is always in great part accidental...".

In this section Jeanne Clegg has drawn upon thirty-six hitherto unpublished letters from Ruskin to Rowland Brown and gives an interesting account of Ruskin's young Italian disciples. The section ends with a harrowing letter, likewise unpublished, from Ruskin to one of them, Count Zerzi, written in January 1879, less than a year after his first complete mental breakdown: "I have not abandoned you - but my brains have abandoned me. Have you not been told that I was raving mad for two months? - held down in my bed sometimes by three men? ... It is I who want help now...".

In the course of the next few years Ruskin suffered further terrible bouts of madness. He was to pay only one more visit to Venice in October 1888 when he was sixty-nine and had just been rejected by another young girl. He remained only a few days; he had to get away from "the elements of imagination" which haunted him there. Let us now turn back once more for comfort in Jan Morris's book and re-read one of those glorious Turner gleams of Ruskin's prime.

# TLS

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## commentary

## A man could stand up

By Hermione Lee

Television and the Arts:  
A Conference  
St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh

On the other side of Edinburgh from St Cecilia's Hall, delegates to the Edinburgh International Television Festival carried on, as in previous years, what David Hearst referred to in *The Scotsman* as its "in-house soul-searching". There was much discussion of the expanding video market, of the implications of high-technology cable and satellite transmission, of union relations; much gossip about new jobs, and much advance salesmanship for TV-AM and Channel 4. Peter Jay, who was giving this year's MacTaggart lecture, quoted Adam Smith to the *Festival Times* interviewer:

People of the same trade seldom meet together even for merriment and diversion but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices.

— implying that his lecture would raise the very theme of *The Wealth of Nations*, the hostility of "vested interests" to the ordinary citizen.

Meanwhile, at the week-long public conference on Television and the Arts at St Cecilia's Hall, the ordinary citizen might well have felt somewhat alienated from the professionals. Huw Weldon, a beaming, ruthless chairman, began the week by pointing to the number of TV "notables" in the audience, and, early in the first session, an angry anarchist in a white suit (who turned out to belong to the Fringe's "Paranoid Productions") expostulated at the "vulgar, frivolous and childish" nature of the discussion and at the use of first names. "Are you a conspiracy?" he asked, rhetorically, as he made his exit. Jeremy Isaacs called the question "arrogant, ignorant and wrong-headed", but the attack, for all its stage-managed character, was not so easily dismissed. There was a measure of complacency, and a feeling that the public's criticisms could be lightly disposed of, as when Sir Huw, concluding the first session, happily attributed the great superiority of British television to any other in the world ("and as for behind the Iron Curtain!"). To the mercy of God?

Professional complacency was most evident in the first general session about policy. Chris Dunkley's gallant attempt, at Sir Huw's invitation, to suggest that the British television might have its limitations (no commissioning of experimental works, no regard for the genuinely popular as opposed to the "best known", no departure from "consensus" standards, no genre of its own apart from drama documentary, no arts on the news, no good social or political plays since the 1960s) glanced off harmlessly from the polished carapaces of what Weldon described as the "great grandees" of television: Brian Wenham (controller of BBC 2) and Jeremy Isaacs, Chief Executive of Channel 4. Wenham, apart from attributing the decline of TV plays to "our younger writers' rush back to nostalgia", hardly bothered to reply to the criticisms. Isaacs used them as an opportunity to plug Channel 4, which would be innovative, unisular, popular (it is interested in jazz, rock and dance), experimental, educative, and altogether unlike BBC2. John Bakewell's brief appearance on *Newswatch* were acclaimed as ample solution to the lack of arts on the news and the complaint about political drama was answered by a popular story of Dennis Potter's having been challenged (when he last appeared, at Edinburgh, admitting that he had become more interested in Christianity than politics) by "a Marxist" in the audience who said that all writing should be about the class struggle. None of us, this out-

once was made to feel (the man in the white suit having long since left) would want to be so silly and boring.

Later in the week the level of discussion was improved by having, for each subject (the visual arts, music, literature, the past, theatre) speakers who were engaged with television in different ways, as fully committed producers or presenters (Melvyn Bragg, Humphrey Burton), as objective but knowledgeable critics (John Drummond, Owen Dudley Edwards), as specialists (Magnus Magnusson), or as men whose creative work was involved to some degree with television (Jonathan Miller, John Mortimer, Raymond Leppard, Michel Holroyd). And I mean *men*. Apart from Marina Vaizey, speaking on the visual arts in the one programme I could not attend, there were no women on the panels. No female playwrights were discussed, no women writers were mentioned in all the talk about adaptations, and the only reference to a programme made by a woman was to Hilary Spurling's on Ivy Compton-Burnett. Melvyn Bragg said that television had a history of adapting works by "men of considerable genius": Huw Weldon asked Jonathan Miller what advice he would give to a "man" who was writing a play for television. If only one overall impression was taken from the conference, it was of an inordinately male-dominated medium.

The apologists spoke with feeling. Melvyn Bragg made an impassioned case for the possibilities of length and detail in TV adaptations: literature on television has replaced the three-volume Victorian novel. Humphrey Burton argued that music on television is educative, restores the visual sense, and thereby concentrates to lay "home listeners" and builds up a valuable archive of performances. Patrick Nutegens enthused about architectural detail on television, and Jonathan Miller, responding to repeated suspicions of the integrity of drama documentaries, called fiction a suter way than fact in arriving at the truth. Whenever a grandiloquent defence of television was made, as when Huw Weldon fervently invoked the BBC producer's contractual undertakings ("to be true to your employer, to your audience, and to your subject") an implausibly moralistic note was struck. Descriptions of television's specific talents — for master classes, for sub-titled opera, for adaptations of short stories — were far more convincing.

But, by and large, it was a week for distrustful qualms rather than for celebration. Repeatedly, the challenges from the floor — an angry Scottish lady asking why no programme had ever been made on Robert the Bruce, a young Fringe writer challenging the moguls to trust him with £5,000 for a year, an archaeologist complaining that television had made archaeology too exciting — were met with obsequious, unalterable conditions: fear of boring the audience. (Robert the Bruce would give you nothing to look at, John Julius Norwich said), lack of space for the arts, financial pressures, and what emerged as an absence of policy. There was no selection procedure for literary subjects, Huw Weldon said: all producers "were looking for something to fall in love with".

Michael Holroyd's fastidious refusal to believe that television could ever be emotionally involving (at which Melvyn Bragg's secon silent "in a matter of Bullshit") and Raymond Leppard's dismissal of the "lawful sound" of television concerts, were countered easily enough by individual examples of good production, both past (Jack Pullman's *War and Peace*, *Calvary*, *Home*, *Ken Russell's Delia*) and recent (*The Good Soldier*, *The History Man*).

and by news of technological developments which would lead to "a stereophonic television in ten years' time in England" (it is already available in Germany and Japan).

Other criticisms were less easily dismissed. John Drummond, Festival organizer, late of BBC programmes such as *Spirit of the Age* and *Music Now*, who had devised the conference and took part in the session on music, scathingly indicted television's dogged "pursuit of what it does badly" — the public concert. What could television do with a concert other than follow the tunes round the orchestra? Why not take risks, instead, with analyses of contemporary music or with "music-theatre"? Why were the master-classes so much loved by Humphrey Burton in fact so unsatisfactory? Because of the insular clash between television's desire for the close-up, and teaching's need for the wide angle: you can't look both at Torteller's face and at the pupil's bowing arm. Television, Drummond concluded, lent itself to personalities, not to music; it was significant that the BBC were recording the charismatic Bernstein, not Haitink, conducting Mahler. (Well, Burton reported, we're doing Haitink as well. That's it, said Drummond, telly people when challenged will always tell you, we did it.)

There was a strong attack from the ornately rhetorical Owen Dudley Edwards on television's inability to be critical. If it made a biographical programme on Lytton Strachey it would have to present him as an altogether remarkable figure. Radio is the medium for criticism; on television, a presenter such as Bragg has to evangelize for the arts. Magnus Magnusson spoke lucidly on behalf of TV's ability to tell stories about history, but pinned down the flaw of drama documentaries and historical reconstructions such as *Churchill and the Generals*. Such programmes distort, because they don't attribute their sources, or distinguish between fact and fiction, or deviate from a "consensus" view of history, as though no disagreements between historians were possible.

That television, as Drummond said, is about personalities rather than the arts, and that it creates its own powerful body of conventions, was apparent from the references made in the discussions. There was, for instance, a predictable emphasis on popular genres — series and "factions" — as opposed to original plays or workshops. "Literature" meant fiction and plays. "And we must touch fleetingly on poetry," Sir Huw said blithely, but they never did.

Creative figures outside television were referred to with disheartening condensation. Jeremy Isaacs wryly said that Trevor Nunn's refusal to have RSC performances relayed led to nine expensive days re-staging *Macbeth* in the Warehouse. Humphrey Burton made a joke about Garrison Birtwistle keeping "him walling two years for an opera in which all the leading characters turn out to be sheep (I was reminded of Edmund Wilson's Hollywood story about Sam Goldwyn's horror at getting *Metropolis* as a script-writer: "My God! he says the hero is a bee!"). John Drummond shook his head over "Lippett's cutting out all shots of Colin Davis conducting his *Double Concerto*, as being too personal: "terribly dull piece of television".

A number of sacred success-images were repeatedly invoked: all discussion of adaptations led to *Nicholas Nickleby*, all references to modern music meant Maxwell Davies, all adventurous playwrights boiled down to Dennis Potter. And there was a strong sense of the allying of personalities and hobby-horses (it was for this, presumably, that the conference was held and reported).



Television and the arts, 1930: the BBC and the Baird Company co-operated in a television broadcast of Pirandello's *The Man with a Flower in his Mouth*. The production was commissioned, in an atmosphere of deep uncertainty, by Val Gielgud, and directed by Lousie Sleekings. George Inns, who did the effects, found it very primitive and concluded that TV had no future.

Leppard took the opportunity to castigate the Arts Council, John Drummond to explain why he had left the "ghettoized" arts departments of television.

A great change took place on the last day of the conference, when Jonathan Miller and John Mortimer conducted a humorous and intelligent argument about theatre and television, which, for once, Huw Weldon was unable to quash with his armoury of middlebrow platitudes. Mortimer made some good jokes (his example of popular series-drama was "six plays about lust in one, that evangelize for the arts. Magnus Magnusson spoke lucidly on behalf of TV's ability to tell stories about history, but pinned down the flaw of drama documentaries and historical reconstructions such as *Churchill and the Generals*. Such programmes distort, because they don't attribute their sources, or distinguish between fact and fiction, or deviate from a "consensus" view of history, as though no disagreements between historians were possible.

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thoughts are different." It is dangerous to believe "that all novels are infinitely transferable into plays", that there's "an immutable structure which will survive transmuting". For this reason the adaptor, far from being self-effacing as Mortimer had suggested (he compared his role to that of a defence lawyer), should be bold: great stories are more successful the more they are "vandalized and reconstructed".

Miller spoke of his own attempts to reconstruct Shakespeare. Television was friendly to Shakespearean tragedy, because the use of close-ups and the possibility of unnaturalistic settings could answer to the tragic limbo of "elsewhere and elsewhere". Though, of course, limbo date: any producer's attempt to convey timelessness "eloquently represents that particular time's view of what timelessness is". Comedy, which requires some form of domestic reality, creates a greater difficulty, arising from "a disjunction between the space in which the audience sits and the space inside the glass membrane. You don't breathe the same air. It is a national space of a geometrically different character, an electronic icon, not a space you can go into." "No," said John Mortimer, "it's a bit of Japanese 'roomongery.' It was perhaps the best way to assess them.

TLS

## Children's books

## The value of stories

by Gillian Avery

J. S. BRATTON:  
The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction  
Croom Helm. £11.95.  
0 85664 777 2

In a book published under the title of *Rich Boys and Poor Boys in 1833* Mrs Barbara Holland included a short story extolling the value of story books. Charles, a gentleman's son, wishes to give William, the son of a small farmer, a copy of Miss Edgeworth's *Parent's Assistant*, from which he himself had derived benefit. He is rebuffed by Mr Maynard, one of his father's friends, who tells him that such tales are a waste of time for everyone, particularly for a boy such as William who should be provided with copy books and manuals of accountancy suitable for the life of useful toil he will have to lead, and not tales which only show him pleasures he can never share, and awake ambitions it would be wrong for him to feel. Charles "with great modesty" ventures to dispute the point. "My father says that in early life the heart requires educating, not less than the understanding; and whilst we were children and under my mother's care, our reading was directed to the formation of our dispositions."

It is a tale that is interesting on many counts. It debates a doctrine that was to dominate many decades of Victorian publishing — that the children of the leisured and the working classes were so totally different that on a secular level neither could read the books of the other with any profit. It is a defence of fiction, which at that time was under fire from utilitarians and evangelicals alike (though it has to be observed that this only extends to fiction with a purpose: Charles points out meaningfully that the useful stories on which he and his brother were reared were very different from the fairy tales and Jack the Giant Killer stories of Mr Maynard's own childhood). And the story as a whole enshrines the belief very dear to so many generations of pedagogues that the child's character can be moulded at will by books. It is this latter aspect of juvenile fiction that J. S. Bratton has elected to consider in *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction*, particularly the books that were intended for the immense "reward" market. Indeed, since only a small minority of children's books can be judged by the normal literary criteria, to study the attitudes of the society which produced them is perhaps the best way to assess them.

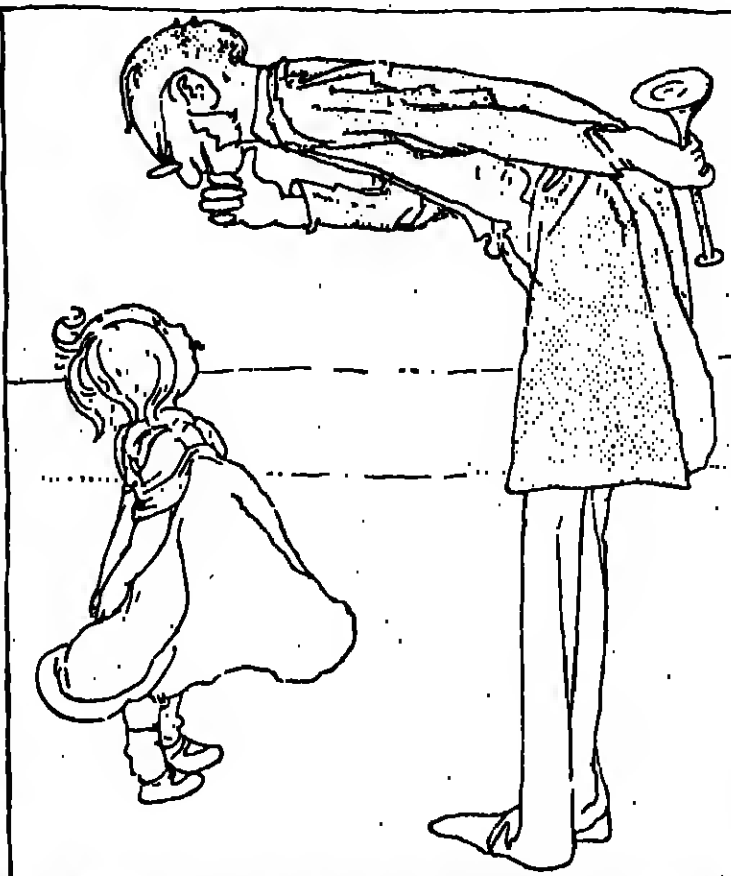
All of us who collect children's books have many examples of reward books, some with the flyleaf inscribed in faded copperplate, some with splendid coloured bookplates: "Public School, Croydon Park, first prize for plain needlework"; "Manchester School Board — special reward for exemplary punctuality"; "Cold Ashton Sunday School — for repetition." And at the back of them are advertisements for others, indicating what a vast industry it all was. Frederick Warne, for instance, in the 1890s, could bring his prices in "The Dawn of Day" series down to fourpence (cloth) for perennial favourites such as *The Basket of Flowers* and *The Dairyman's Daughter* (which had originally appeared, the one in 1833, the other in 1809), while rising to six shillings (extra cloth gilt; gilt edges) for such matters as *The Pictorial Cabinet of Marvels*, no doubt aimed at the more prosperous boys' private schools. Shaw's, about the same date, put their list into categories: Eighteenpenny Present Books (seemingly for the cottage home); Stories with a Purpose (all at 3s 6d); Helpful Stories for Eldar Girls (which went up to five shillings); and Stories for Girls (rather cheaper). In many homes the prizes might be the only fiction, if not the only books, and would be cherished as much for decoration as for anything contained inside the covers. And they were cherished as objects, the immaculate condition in which we find so many of them is proof of that. There is indeed a warning in a story published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, *The Sunday School Prize*, about desiring such a book too much. Lucy Austin, the prize pupil of her Sunday school, with an unblemished record of attendance and conduct, reveals the old Adam in her by a frenzy of grief when illness and consequent loss of attendance deprives her of the first prize for the year — "such a beautiful one, in a red cover, all over gold and a lot of pictures".

The prizes had not always been books. Raikes in the 1790s used to dispense combs as well as books outside Gloucester Cathedral to the orphans who had accompanied him to seven o'clock prayers. Hannah More rewarded the regular attenders at her Mendip schools with pennies and ginger-bread during the year, and books at the end of it — a Bible as first prize, a Prayer Book as second, and Cheap Repository Tracts for the rest. In 1809 the Religious Tract Society started on its career of juvenile publishing by listing certain hawkers' tracts as "adapted for reward, and to lead them, through Divine grace, to walk in the lovely paths of piety."

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"I do not like thee, Doctor Fell", one of Charles Robinson's illustrations for *The Big Book of Nursery Rhymes*, 1911. The picture is taken from *Popular Nursery Rhymes* edited by Jennifer Muller (160pp Granada. £5.95, 0 246 11492 4). This collection which is illustrated by drawings from early editions of nursery rhymes will be published on September 24.

Schools' (these now being firmly established through the efforts of such people as Mrs Trimmer, Raikes and Hannah More). They were handicapped by great lack of suitable material, since the tracts must contain "pure truth, and some account of the way of a sinner's salvation" and should also be in good plain English; Hannah More's tracts were not regarded as properly evangelical. It was not until 1814 that they advertised the commencement of a series of children's books; three only, of which possibly the most readable was the Rev John Campbell's "Recent instance of the Lord's goodness to Children, exemplified in the happy Death of James Steven, Camberwell, near London, who died in March 8th, 1806, aged eight years and eight months". By 1849 the Society circulated four million children's books and its catalogue had some 300 titles "adapted to convey important truths to youthful minds, and to lead them, through Divine grace, to walk in the lovely paths of piety."

And much the same pattern could be discerned everywhere. The buyers of reward books by the 1880s were generally looking for "wholesome" books of "good tone" rather than ones that gave direct teaching on religion or morals. Nor was their choice generally governed by the social class of the reader, though old attitudes might linger in country parishes where squararchical influence still made itself felt. Board School children no longer had to be given stories with a setting that was familiar (there are signs, however, that the pedagogues of the 1980s wish to revert to this policy); there was a great deal of historical fiction, and the

London School Board included fairy tales and fantasy on its library lists.

But what had been the impact of the earlier style of reward book? Barbara Holland's story of William and his books tells us what the *Parent's Assistant* did; it had corrected want of courage in one boy, taught sister Sally to be humble and obedient, made Nancy industrious, and so on. As a writer of moral stories herself she would indeed like to think that they had impact. But in real life? I myself would surmise that the examples of infant plety and death which from Janeway's *Token for Children* in 1671 until the early nineteenth century was staple Sunday reading for the young evangelicals had a profound effect upon Dickens and thus through him on scores of minor writers. Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopedia*, which implied in all its studies of great lives that anybody could be a genius if he took pains undoubtedly owed much to Samuel Smiles. But had Smiles himself (born in 1812) been influenced by the little stories of the industrious apprentice sort so popular in the late Georgian period?

Dr Bratton has avoided all speculation of this sort. Her book is not about the impact but about the message itself. She gives a brief account of the various typas of reader, of their educational and religious background and then devotes herself to their reading. Here she is, one senses, rather hampered because so much has already been written on this subject during the last few years. Nancy Cunniff, for instance, in *Marketing Angels* in 1979 wrote a full account of the careers and achievements of Charlotte Tucker — A.L.O.E. — and Maria Strickland, and Dr Bratton, with equally full accounts, has nothing new to add. And — perhaps because she feels too much has already been said — she hardly touches on the schoolboy ethic. The manliness preached by Arnold and misinterpreted by Thomas Hughes, for instance, had a profound effect on school stories after *Tom Brown*, books very popular as rewards; and we know too something of the impact of *Eric or Little by Little* on its readers from the letters that Reginald Farrar quotes in his title of his father. But on the credit side she has made a full and sympathetic study of Elizabeth Sewall, and of such American favourites as *The Wide, Wide World* and *The Little Lighter* (but not *Elsie Dinsmore*) produced an authoritative account of the reward book trade and its publishers, and has read more of Kingdon's work than surely anybody living. The book is both serious and scholarly and contains useful background material.

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## Approaches to literature

By Holly Eley

Children's Literature, Volume 9  
Annual of the Modern Language Association Division on Children's Literature and the Children's Literature Association  
241pp. Yale University Press. £19.30.  
0 300 02623 4

Education through literature is the subject explored in volume nine of the excellent Yale Children's Literature series. In his editorial, Buckminster Fuller writes "Children demonstrate right from the beginning that their genes are organized to help them in apprehend, comprehend, co-ordinate and employ - in all directions". Ways in which literature and its media derivations can help, and have in the past helped, to provide the right environment to nurture these genes is examined here in a selection of essays and reviews of wide range and variety.

Books considered to be educational aids that have been available for some time include *David Copperfield* and *Jane Eyre*, both found by Ronald Berman to be examples of the nineteenth-century preoccupation (often reflected in today's teenage novels) with children excluded from family and society; Anne Hollander provides a persuasive critique of *Lila Women* as a "simple, stable vision of feminine completeness". Martin Green in "The Charm of Peter Pan", focuses on a turn of the century phenomenon, that of the self-importance felt by eight year old upper-class English boys during the phase "when they were proud to be themselves, because that was when other people were fond of them".

Three essays on didactic aspects of children's literature in other cultures are all rewarding, occasionally surprising, reading. An excerpt from *Borners (Children's Island)* by P. C. Jersild, translated by Malley and Ann Charters with an introduction by Ann Charters, is a bleak description of post-war life in a neglected urban Sweden. "There was actually nothing that children were best at, except possibly creeping in and out of small windows". Marian Ury, in "Stepmother Tales in Japan", unveils an oriental obsession that might be explained by jealousy inherent in a polygamous society where life expectation was short, either parent

might die while children were still young. In "Journey to the East: Impressions of Children's Literature and Instructional Media in Contemporary China", Neilven Duncan Easter notes that a single set of third century BC "messages", the "Classics", which consist of moral teachings and stories and are transmitted by a variety of media, including songs, paper cuts, paintings and folkcraft, still provide an educative basis for Chinese children's culture.

Four essays on children's literature and the media by insiders confirm the pessimistic view that literature translated into film may reach the masses but is not yet as didactically effective as a straightforward read. In "Television and Reading in the Development of Imagination", Jerome L. Singer and Dorothy G. Singer tell us that more than ninety-six per cent of American families own at least one television set. In a survey carried out among middle-class children at Yale the Singers found that the average amount of viewing was twenty-three hours a week for a child of kindergarten age - it is well-known that the poorer the child the more he gazes; television is likely to retard the development of memory, "social interchange with parents", and quite a few other skills usually considered pleasant and desirable. The Singers conclude somewhat helplessly that since the set is here to stay "we have to begin to find ways of taking its tremendous power of attraction for children and harnessing that for more effective education". Tom Davenport describes his attempt in his live-action film of Grimm Brothers' folktales, *Hansel and Gretel: An Approach to the Media Center for Children* in New York, evaluates Davenport's film translation and finds it an "effective essence of the original".

Perhaps the most optimistic expert is Morton Schindel, President of Weston Woods Studios, where children's books have been successfully adapted to film since the 1950s. Though he feels that Isaac Bashevis Singer and Bruno Bettelheim's warnings against the telling of fairyfolk tales with didactic intention are particularly applicable to film, that film and television's passive experience is no substitute for reading, he justifies his commitment to media "that have no other comparable power to lead people back to the book on which a film is based", by citing statistics such as the sale figures for copies of Alex Haley's *Roots* after syndication of the television series based on that book.

Much attention in *Children's Literature: Volume Nine* is devoted to the dissemination of learning to culturally-starved young blacks. In Jan Baker's final chapter, "Summer Reading at Woodlands: A Juvenile Library of the South" (an account and bibliography of a children's library accumulated in the 1850s by a Georgia cotton-planter) we are told how this used to be done. "A Missionary", author of *Plain and Easy Catechism: Designed for the Benefit of Coloured Children*, unhesitatingly prescribed punishment as a placebo for deprivation.

The Lord delights in them that speak  
The words of truth, but every liar,  
Must have his portion in the lake,  
That burns with brimstone and with fire.

The two best chapters are on contrasting present-day black approaches to literature. James Miller's "The Novelist as Teacher" is good on Chinua Achebe's explicitly intellectual and moralistic attitude to writing for children, and John Cech's essay, "Breaking Chains: Brother Blue, Storyteller", transcends the literary critic formula and is a short story in itself.

Brother Blue is an American black of humble origin who eluded his way through Harvard in the 1940s, studied divinity with the intention of becoming a cleric, then studied drama and mythology and later, under the influence of A. B. Lord, became interested in the oral tradition. He refused to accept payment for his "act" and, supported by his schoolteacher wife, improvises magical stories all over America - on the street, on television, in community theatres and in schools. In keeping with the traditional dress of African storytellers, his clothes are "pinned with talismans", butterflies, rainbows, a saxophone, any of which, in interaction with the audience, can inspire an impromptu fable. If he senses that he cannot sustain an audience he retreats behind a mask. Similarly, he refuses to discuss his views on children's television, its personalities, children's literature: he despises what he calls "the idolatry" of teachers and librarians who memorize a book or story in order to tell it to children. Although he has won many awards for his temporary entertainment, he has consistently refused to tape or record his message - an immediate message, conveyed through jokes or mime, underpinned by erudition and experience, that teaches the same sort of values that are dear to Achebe.

## Loving liberty

By Cara Chanteau

F. TENNYSON JESSE

*Moonraker*  
Virago Modern Classics. £2.50.  
0 86068 186 6

F. Tennyson Jesse's *Moonraker*, first published in 1927, may come as something of a surprise to today's readers living in an age when we are told that the world is a better place than it ever was. The novel is set in the world of her "dollar" and "should be as assiduous" - purloining, carter, spywork, Tennyson Jesse's novel is a swashbuckling story of pirates on the high seas, of ingenuity of ideas in Empire dresses, which reads like a latter-day *Coriolanus*. But in addition to this - and surely why it has just been reprinted in the Virago Modern Classic series - beneath its Victorian guise, it can serve as a commentary on the contemporary debate on the difference between the sexes.

In *Moonraker* the debate about the freedom of women is deliberately made a reflection of another struggle - the fight for liberation in San Domingo (Haiti) by the black slaves under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture. But lest this mixture sound too much like an overbearing tract for the times, it should be said

that these two arguments for human liberty are strikingly and successfully linked.

Young Jacky runs away to sea and is captured by pirates led by the fearless Captain Lovel. In spite of himself, Jacky finds much that is human and admirable in the pirates, but it is when the liberal French nobleman "Monsieur Raoul" persuades the Captain to sail to San Domingo that the real adventure begins. In this strange island of beauty and richness, of high mountains and lizard-biting like levels, he meets Toussaint L'Ouverture and the two other black generals: the sinister Christophe and Dessalines. Over the next few months Jacky, fighting on the side of the blacks, witnesses the resistance to the French troops and Toussaint's final betrayal. Much of this is related in the dead-pan way of a child, with issues clear-cut, and little exposition of cause and effect.

Toussaint emerges as the hero - a great and noble man as well as an able and charismatic leader of men. The portrait is idealized, but it does draw on many of the accepted facts about Toussaint, such as his ardent Catholicism, his Spartan diet, and the thoroughbred he had stationed throughout the island. It might be possible to criticise the depiction of him as politically naïve, with no admission of his failings, but it is difficult not to appreciate an author who has Toussaint say of Raoul: "If

is true he loves liberty, she is a goddess he admires. But we are not fighting for an ideal, Jacky: we are fighting for the actual liberty of our bodies that they shall not be ill-used."

When the fight to save Toussaint is irrevocably lost, the Captain, Jacky, Raoul and his sweetheart repair to the pirate ship. What follows amounts to a dramatized debate on the nature of woman: "You know, I feel sure as well as any of your sex, what is admirable in a woman. Gentleness, fragility, meekness. Even if I may so express myself, a pleasing feebleness." "Health, strength and courage, are these of no avail except in a man? Must a woman have a waist distorted out of all semblance to nature, have a tumorous disposition, a squeamish sensibility?" The unusualness of the book resides in the astounding and painful twist in the denouement of the plot.

As Bob Leeson remarks in his preface to the book, *Moonraker* bites off more than it can chew, although it is probably fair to say that it succeeds more than it fails, and inspires more than it stifles. It is one of the latest additions to a series which has been promoted, as being of particular interest to teenage readers. Recent volumes have included Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career*, Henry Handel Richardson's *The Golden Boy*, and the appealing *Diary of Helen Morley*.

## A country of customs

By Patricia Craig

JANE GARDAM:  
The Hollow Land  
Julia MacRae Books. £5.25.  
0 86203 023 4

Christ keep the Hollow Land  
Through the sweet spring-side  
When the apple blossoms bloom  
The lowly bent hill side.

Jane Gardam's epigraph is taken from William Morris, and her setting is the Cornish fells, "hollow" not in the sense of being opposed to hilly, as in the Yeats poem, but because of the dazed mind workings which lie beneath the ground. It is a place of distinct character, with becks, tarns and quarries at every turn. In the opening episode the narrator (eight-year-old Bell Teesdale) remembers the derelict farmhouses scattered all along the dales - "too old or too far out or that bit too high for farmers now". Abandoned to weather and birds and sheep - until holidaymakers, tired of the Lake District, think of buying or leasing the little stone dwellings.

Light Trees is the farmhouse the Bateman family rents. Batemans and Teesdales nearly fail to get along at first, before Bell and young Harry Bateman take a hand (these two meet and quickly become friends for life). Friction - the result of a misunderstanding - is smoothed over and an alliance established between the two families. Summer after summer the London Batemans come; and often in the winter as well. The place is rich in anecdotes and alarms; something is always going on, and everything is relished to the utmost. This goes for weather and seasons too: summer is a blaze of colour, the meadows "a bright pink-yellow turning lazy with heat". The becks dry

up and dusty cherry trees lean over the orchard wall. Winter is icicle time, when fires are piled with "green furry branches sticking out two feet into the room". Rain in August comes in great curtains sweeping the grey fells: "away and away stretched dismal wet hills". Burning or sodden or snowbound, the countryside is full of enchantments.

A ring of old green turf marks a Celtic settlement; secret water runs inside the hills where gorse and wild thyme grow in profusion. The supernatural is evoked with feeling and also with a spark of humour. "Used to be vampires up yonder", Bell declares; outlandish stories and legends abound in the fruitful uplands. Kendal, the sweep, who takes the Batemans fishing on a wet day, is one storyteller; Old Hewitson, Bell's grandfather, is another. Kendal well knows how to set the atmosphere - "tallow-candles and the dogs howling... in the yard" - before embarking on the old tale about the Hand of Glory. Mrs Bateman, who happens, on one occasion, to step out of doors in a flannel nightdress and antique apron, is mistaken for a ghost. Every action and every custom is charged with significance.

With this book, Jane Gardam has reverted to the "linked stories" framework of her earlier *Black Foxes: White Faces* (for adults only). In each episode a satisfactory advance in neighbourliness is achieved or a disaster averted. Bell and Harry get into a tight spot underground, but luck and resourcefulness get them out of it. A "household word" (a female television celebrity), whose manner affronts the downright villagers, considers buying an out-of-the-way farm but is brought to her senses after a flood. Thieves make off unsuccessfully with an antique table, and its owner is thereby apprised of its worth. In the long

concluding story, "Tomorrow's Arrangements" (set in the year 1999), the Bateman family (or at least grown-up Harry) is threatened with the worst misfortune of all: the loss of Light Trees. Against a spectacular background, however - an eclipse of the sun - their would-be supplanter is sent about his business.

The children's story traditionally ends on a bright note, as these stories do; nothing else in Jane Gardam's approach is conventional. She makes the most, as always, of the subtle and the untoward. Her work has always created problems of classification: when she writes about children, it is in a way that does not exclude an adult readership. *The Hollow Land* is typical in this respect: there is not a limited, intimate or chatty observation in it. It creates an overwhelming impression of vigour and freshness. The aside to picturesque living it enumerates - the lovely red-and-white patchwork quilts, the old oak settles and grandfather clocks - all contribute to the sense of order and continuity which is part of the countryside's charm. (There is no undue regard for tradition among the country people, though; they would as soon have the money as the cumbersome heirlooms. And the "London mother", Mrs Bateman, laughs at herself for dressing in Victorian clothes.)

Jane Gardam's writing is as exact, as condensed and striking as ever. Underlying the engaging plots of these stories - plenty of frolics and fun - is a single theme: attachment to a special locality. In the William Morris prose romance of the same title (an elaborate fable which contains the three simple verses of Jane Gardam's epigraph) the Hollow Land is appropriately a dream-country - "second best" (after Heaven), as Morris has it, "of the places God has made".

## Outlandish parts

By Jennifer Moody

LINDA HOY

Your Friend, Rebecca  
Bodley Head. £3.25.  
0 370 30418 7

PEGGY WOODFORD

The Girl with a Voice  
Bodley Head. £3.50.  
0 370 30423 3

MICHAEL DE LARRABELLI

The Bribbles Go for Broke  
Bodley Head. £3.75.  
0 370 30413 6

CAROL KENDALL

The Firelings  
Bodley Head. £3.95.  
0 370 30401 2

The response to recession should be adaptation. The Bodley Head have adapted to hard times by introducing new format paperback originals launching upon the public a bumper crop of four novels, two under the Books for New Adults imprint and two simply under The Bodley Head.

Both Books for New Adults are about girls growing up. Linda Hoy's first book *Your Friend, Rebecca* has presumably an ironic title, as the one thing about Rebecca is that she has no friends. Her hands, and her voice, are raised against everyone in sight, especially the unfortunate staff of the school she attends. Rebecca's trouble is that her adored Quaker mother died some short time before the opening of the story. Her father has turned to drink, vomiting dramatically into the front garden crocus bed. Her own inability to cope is epitomized by burnt Crispy Cod Fries and dried-out tins of baked beans. However, there is one bright spot on the horizon: the school drama class. After an introductory drama class, the class is encouraged to improvise on themes from King Lear. Rebecca, by dint of some inspired misunderstanding, acts out her own emotional problems and begins, by

presto, to be cured. She starts to attend Quaker meetings and even manages to realize that her father is quite an attractive man to be seen with, especially if she can help him to knock the drinking habit. We are not quite told that Rebecca is taking over where her mother left off. The book is written in the first person by Rebecca herself, and it is the unfortunate result that her exploration of her own motives makes her appear not only rude, violent and inconsiderate, but self-obsessed as well. Her conversion is welcome, but fundamentally fails to convince.

Peggy Woodford has written *The Girl with a Voice* in a style which combines clear delineation with sympathetic understanding. Claudia, the highly attractive daughter of the local vicar, has two problems. She has a beautiful singing voice which she wants to train, and she is in love with a charming weak-willed older man; she keeps both things secret. The setting is a boys' holiday hostel in the Yorkshire Dales, at which Rod and two other susceptible young men are voluntary helpers. Claudia helps out in the kitchen to raise money for her training. Since Rod plays the guitar, he comes to hear Claudia's voice and, like her, to believe that, with help, it could be great. As her confidence grows in the future of her singing, Claudia accepts the lack of future in her love. The book ends on an equivocal note, with the opening of a new life.

The two new Bodley Head novels are about quasi-humans: *Bribbles* and *Firelings*. In *The Bribbles Go for Broke* Michael de Larrabelli gives us a second chance to make the acquaintance of the pointed ears and stunted shapes of those "normal children [who have] become Bribbles very slowly without being aware of it". They are lured into a police-baited trap to rescue a horse, and in making their escape, retreat into the sewers of Wandsworth. The territory of a hostile sub-species of Bribbles, the class is encouraged to improvise on themes from King Lear. Rebecca, by dint of some inspired misunderstanding, acts out her own emotional problems and begins, by

force and vivid imagination; he depicts vile Bribbles, vile policemen and, vilest of all, the Wendles. The reader smells the state urine, sees the oozing sewage. The question is: does the reader want to?

In *The Firelings* Carol Kendall has written a positive and exciting tale of these folk "who were no bigger than Firelings were meant to be". They live on an active volcanic peninsula, personified as The Belcher, whose arms and legs are the solidified remains of previous outpourings of lava, and whose renewed eruptions are explained as fluted resentment. As the underground rumblings increase, the older Fireling establishment threatens to relapse into proprietary superstition. It is the young Firelings who, working together to decipher ancient inscriptions and reinterpret old legends, lead the community through danger to refuge. Mrs Kendall writes easily. She has created a convincing mythology, a credible vocabulary, an endearing society; in short, a believable and attractive new world. I hope we shall see more of it before long.

The Bodley Head have recently published a set of thirty-five facsimile editions of *Early English Children's Books* from the Osborne Collection in Toronto (£275 until April 30, 1982, then £325 - 370 - 3371 - 7). The books which are produced with paper, colour and binding matching the original editions demonstrate the wide range of children's books in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They include *Orbis Sensatillum Pictoris* by J. A. Comenius (1777), *The Birthday Gift* or *The Joy of a New Doll* from papers cut by a lady (1796 - one of the earliest examples of a children's picture book), several chapbooks, *The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast* by William Roscoe (1807), a board game *The Mansion of Bliss* (1810) and Walter Crane's *Puss in Boots* (1897). There is a companion volume of commentary by Margaret Crawford Maloney, the Head of Osborne Collection, included with the set.

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FROM ANDRE DEUTSCH

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BOOKS

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is planned for November 20.

For details of advertising in  
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on

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T.L.S.



## Second helpings

By Lucy Micklethwait

This is a selection of children's picture-books for the younger age group published with Christmas in view. Like any helping of Christmas pudding, it contains much that is heavy going, but there is one book of outstanding quality — a silver sipping shining through the stew. There is also a particular book that at least, found quite inedible.

Ron and Ailie van der Meer apparently consider that children should come to terms with life at an early age. The least disturbing of their books deals with the everyday matters that make Mum annoyed, Dad angry, Granny furious, and the children miserable. Their latest book *I'm fed up!* contains a similar set of dull ill-tempered adults and sullen children. Finding life at home intolerable, the horrid Paula meets her "other self" who produces some magic sweets with the power to turn her into anything she feels like. Predictably she finds life even less tolerable elsewhere and finally decides that she was better off at home. Children, if given the chance, may book: this book for its clear bright cartoon pictures, but it should carry a Government Health Warning, for it is raw and unimpaired from start to finish.

*Let's Play* gives a reassuring, if bland, view of life. It shows some contented children playing with a series of toys. The children are scrubbed and immaculately dressed in bloomers or sailor suit, and I suspect that Nanny is lurking off-stage with a hairbrush. All is clean and clear and calmly painted. The names of the toys are written in bold black type and provide some scope for word recognition.

*Why the Rope Went Tight*, written by Bamber Gascoigne and illustrated by his wife Christine, promised to be a really clever book. Had I not been expecting so much from the text, I might not have been so disappointed. A clown gives Mike one end of a rope which is dragged over the edge of the page because "just round the corner was Frank the Fitter, who had sold the World's Longest Frankfurter to Mike's friend Millic, who had been given the other end of the rope by the clown." So the frankfurter is stretched over to the next page because, we discover, it had been grabbed by a dog called Pedigree Chimp whose lead goes tight because "... and so on past a host of grotesque characters all the way round the perimeter of the big top until we see Liekehop Leo, the fiercest, greediest, and most generally rumpus and bumptious lion that Creation has ever known", who, if it weren't for the chain fixed securely on the previous page, would be devouring Mike who is still hanging onto his rope. Of the circus folk, all dressed in the colours of neapillan ice-cream and boiled sweets. I particularly enjoyed Glob the Blob in his Billy Bunter specs and his stunning striped suit.

*The Wild Baby* by Barbro Lindgren and Eva Eriksson concerns a mischievous toddler called Bodger who "Eats toothpaste, worms, and snips his hair." Smashes his toys, torments and teases! Swinging on pretend trapezes". His mother is permanently on the verge of a nervous breakdown and there is an insensitive scene in which the child is seen falling down the loo ("Help, help, I'm drowning"). The structure is bad and the translation is worse, but the illustrations are good — a cross between Edward Ardizzone on a windswept day and Posy Simmonds.

Alex is the story of a little boy who juggles and lives with his Aunt Sofie-with-an-f, a fussy old boot who does the dusting with the aid of a magnifying glass ("Ahl Half an eyelash!"), and his Uncle Phileas-without-one who doesn't do much at all. Alex runs away to join the circus with his aunt in

RON AND AILIE VAN DER MEER: *I'm Fed Up!* Hamish Hamilton, £3.95, 0 241 10483.

SATOMI ICHIKAWA: *Let's Play*. Heinemann, £3.95, 0 434 94365 7.

BAMBER AND CHRISTINA GASCOIGNE: *Why the Rope Went Tight*. Methuen/Walker Books, £3.95, 0 416 05007 4.

MARY TOZER: *Queen Yesno*. World's Work, £3.95, 0 437 79422 9.

PETER SPIER: *Fire Station* (0 00 140137

hot pursuit. The circus arrives at Melonia where the moustachioed Prince Ping and Prince Pong, financed by the Fizz brothers (watermelon magicians), are fighting over the throne. Alex repels an invasion by firing watermelons which explode in clouds of fizz and foam. The circus, Alex and Aunt Sofie-with-an-f climb aboard the Zobian flying machines and sail away into the sunset. It is uncomfortable to think that Alex is still having to put up with that dreadful aunt, and what on earth has happened to Uncle Phileas? The tale is set in busy up-chaos format with decorative borders, chunks of text and speech balloons, but Alex is not a meaty hero and there is not enough strength in the story itself to support so many complicated diversions.

*Peepo!* is the silver sipping. It is last-story-at-bedtime book, and to get into this category books must be tempting, comfortable and just long enough. On the first page we see a baby who has just woken up. "Here's a little baby! One, two, three! Stands in his cot! What does he see?" The book is set in the 1940s and is based on Allan Ahlberg's real and very personal memories of childhood. Through a strategically placed hole in the opposite page, the baby sees "... his father sleeping in the big brass bed! And his mother too! With a hairnet on her head." Other such peep-holes show his mother doing out porridge at breakfast time, cleaning the kitchen window or snoozing at tea-time in the armchair; his father carries in the coal and kneels ready with a towel by the bathtub, sleeves rolled up. The baby himself is seen chewing the side of his cot, fiddling with his mother's necklace and hanging on to the straps of her overall as she carries him up to bed. The period details are perfect but never intrusive. An air-raider warden is glimpsed in the road, there is a gas-mask on the mantelpiece, an Oxo tin on the shelf, a picture of Churchill on the wall. The flower designs round the mirror and on the wallpaper are, just right, as are father's fairisle waistcoat and mother's printed dress — first seen hanging in the cupboard by her bed. The soap in the cracked cup by the kitchen sink reappears on the floor at bedtime, and the baby's teddy and ball are always to be found somewhere. Janet Ahlberg's illustrations are absolutely convincing. This delightful book could prove to be as addictive as the award-winning *Each Peach Pear Plum*.

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## Photographics

By Ruth Hawthorn

Methuen have produced the first twelve volumes of a new series called "Chatterbooks" for very small children, all illustrated by photographs. They contain the work of three different photographers who have, except in the case of John Walsley, also provided the words. A note to the storyteller is printed at the back of each book to the effect that you can read the printed text if you like, but you may find it more effective just to talk about the pictures. It also suggests that the books will appeal to children from about eight months onwards, and, although I agree that the series as a whole will cover a long period from babyhood to five or six, individually the books seem to be aimed at specific age groups.

The four books by Helen Piers consist of simple animal pictures, good for young children but not very different from each other nor from a large number of similar books already on the market. (Helen Piers herself has written and photographed some very good ones.) The pictures are rather variable in quality but a few are outstanding. In particular there is one of a child and a chimpanzee sitting side by side appreciating a large red ball which they are touching with their finger tips. They have exactly the same expression of contemplative pleasure on their faces. There is another of an elephant seen from the front, stretching his trunk a long way down to reach a drink of water. Eventually I remembered where I had seen the gesture before — in a Babar book. It is much more interesting as a photograph and much harder to achieve. A clever artist can bring out the animality of animals — or their humanness — as required, by with the flick of a felt pen but a simple snap of a pig, say, may not trigger any response at all.

The four by Lello Berg and John Walsley have a slightly more mature appeal. They tell simple stories and feature many more children and mothers (really my only serious objection to any of these books is that there are not enough fathers). The fact that they are photographs rather than drawings is important: real life-children in real, less than perfect homes doing familiar things, in the hands of a good photographer live a very good chance of catching the attention. In *In a house I know* there's a mother who really is very familiar in her old cord jeans with two nappy pins stuck in the sleeve of her jumper and forgotten, giving the sort of one-year-old I used to know a good old-fashioned hug. *A tickle* and *Our walk* are rather alike; *A tickle* has a stronger story line and contains a photograph that captures that wonderful expression on children's faces when they know a tickle is coming, paralysed with delight. The hot, hot day uses language with more

care: "It was hot, so hot. I said I would stay in the sun and never go in till morning". It is printed next to a photograph of a little girl in deep thought, holding a piece of bread and marmalade halfway to her mouth and dressed in nothing but a large white towel. This clearly genuine utterance matches the photographic record with a wonderful, unsentimental precision.

Camilla Jessel's four books are on a different level again. She deals with four uncertain moments in a child's life, telling a story around a real child and photographing her way, medium cool, through their genuine anxiety and comfort. All these four work very well indeed. They have great individuality, and because they are about important things there seems more point to them, though this does not stop them being great fun and not at all pious. Going to the doctor is beautifully photographed: Clare obviously did feel absolutely terrible, cuddled forlornly in her mother's lap and sucking her blanket, but was gradually cheered by the old doctor routine ("No!" said Clare. But then she said, "Yes"). *Away for the night* is just as accurate, capturing that look on the brink of panic as Anna is abandoned, and the subsequent stages of forgetting about her mother as she becomes intrigued by familiar processes in an unfamiliar home. *Moving house* is also good ("You can't have it — it's mine!" the hero wails as the removal men carry his bed downstairs). But best of all is *The new baby*, not because of any new suggestions or insights, but because the family appears so genuinely happy, and so at ease in the presence of the photographer. There is also a very nice father in this book. As the publishers point out, photographs do enable a child to recognize and identify with many of the pictures. Whatever the power of the photographs in the books generally, the atmosphere of real love comes over in this one to an extent that drawings could not achieve.

HELEN PIERS: *Animal Notes* (0 416 88820 8), *Animal Homes* (0 416 88840 2), *Animal Babies* (0 416 88850 X), *Eat up* (0 416 88820 8).

LELLO BERG AND JOHN WALSLEY: (0 416 88780 5), *A tickle* (0 416 88780 5), *Our walk* (0 416 88810 1), *The hot, hot day* (0 416 88790 2), *In a house I know* (0 416 88800 3).

CAMILLA JESSEL: *Moving house* (0 416 88800 1), *The new baby* (0 416 88860 7), *Going to the doctor* (0 416 88890 9), *Away for the night* (0 416 88870 4).

Methuen, £1.25 each.

Blackwell Raftree (108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF) have recently published a series of picture books intended to teach young children simple concepts. The first six titles in their "Beginning to Learn About" series are *Numbers*, *Opposites*, *Colours*, *Henning*, *Shapes* and *Looking*. They are £2.50 net each.

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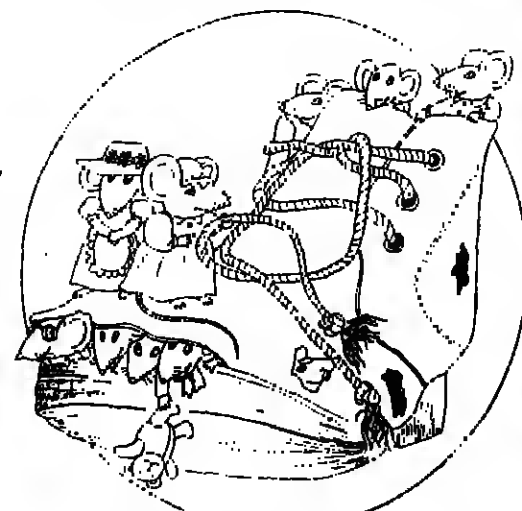
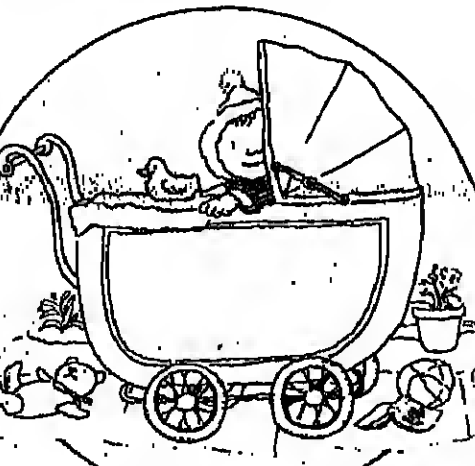
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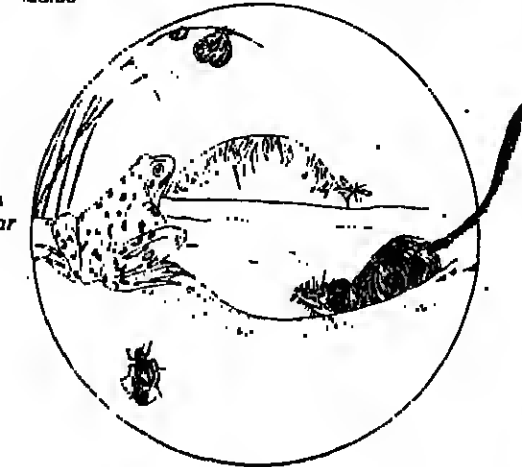
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## Family trouble

### By Judith Elkin

GERALDINE KAYE:  
*The Day After Yesterday*  
Illustrated by Glenys Ambrus  
Andie Deutsch. £4.25.  
0 233 97344 3

GRISelda GIFFORD:  
*Earwig and Beetle*  
Gollancz. £4.50.  
0 375 030070

Finding satisfactory stories for the middle age range has always been difficult. It is not easy, within the limitations of a relatively short story, to create convincing characters, atmosphere and plot. Here are two new books by authors who in the past have contributed significantly in this area.

Geraldine Kaye has always demonstrated a positive and diverse interest in other cultures in her stories for children, as well as the ability to write a good story. This is reflected in some of her early books set in Malaya and Africa, such as *Kassim Goes Fishing* and *Kofi and the Eagle*, which show a deep feeling for the gypsy culture.

Having lived and taught Chinese children in Singapore, she draws upon her experiences there and in Hong Kong for *The Day After Yesterday*. This is a finely drawn story capturing well the teeming bustle of Hong Kong, where families may live in such crowded familiarity whilst jealously guarding their secrets and "family honour". The story begins in London where ten-year-old Su Su's parents own a Chinese Take-Away (what else?). But the enigmatic Su Su lives in a world of her own, haunted by foggy memories of her terrifying first weeks in Hong Kong, when she was left in sole charge of her younger brothers and baby sister, Chai Egg. All she can remember are four doors, with nothing beyond. But one day she is able to relive this last month in Hong Kong and relate her story to her English friend. She recalls how Chai disappeared and the children feared that she had been

sold as a mui-tsai or household slave. The children's search for their small sister and Su Su's determination in the face of frightening obstacles, make compelling reading in this often moving story. The atmosphere is charmingly captured in Glenys Ambrus's illustrations.

This is not a long story, but Geraldine Kaye manages to explore with great sensitivity the loyalties, obligations, fears and hopes within a Chinese family, as well as the heroism of children in the face of threat and difficulty.

Griselda Gifford in her earlier books for children, such as *Cass the Brave* and *Silver's Day* also showed considerable ability in writing for this middle age group. Her new book, *Earwig and Beetle*, however, is disappointing. It is a rather pedestrian and old-fashioned school story, showing little of the acute observation apparent in some of her earlier books. *Earwig and Beetle* are the nicknames given to two new boys at a Boys' Preparatory School at the beginning of term. Jake (with prominent ears, hence Earwig) is very reluctant to go to Brightsea School, particularly as his parents have just separated and he is feeling confused and rebellious. The only other new boy, Aziz, with an unpronounceable African name, also hates school. After an initial mutual antagonism, the two boys, united in their nicknames, plot to disrupt the smooth-running of the school. Some of the schoolboy pranks are amusing, although the teachers and, in fact, the other boys, seem remarkably ineffectual in controlling these two tricky new boys. But the characterization generally is shallow, even the precocious Aziz is not totally convincing and the multi-cultural interest is minimal. Jake's parents, with their respective new "friends" of the opposite sex, seem figures of fun with no real strength of character, and the whole treatment of the separated parents theme could, I feel, have been developed more satisfactorily. Quite reasonably, there are no easy answers at the end of the story, but the author's attempt to explain how Jake comes to terms with his new life, is unconvincing.

## Cosmic tales

### By Josephine Karavasil

JOHN BAILEY, KENNETH McLEISH, DAVID SPEARMAN (Editors)  
*Gods and Men*  
Myths and Legends from the World's Religions  
Oxford University Press. £5.95.  
0 19 278020 4

VAL BIRO:  
*Hungarian Folk Tales*  
Oxford University Press. £4.95.  
0 19 274126 8

Whether Antipodean or African, Norse or Chinese, whichever the period and whatever the place, the joys and fears of the cosmos are seen to be common to all myths.

A collection can fall miserably by cantering blithely through "Myths of the World", but *Gods and Men* does not. Although the myths and legends are retold by three people, there is a coherence to the whole, for the editors share an ability for simple, direct prose which does not detract from the immensity of the subject or the particularity of place. The occasional strong graphic image, emotive word or prophetic charge of tense scorch scenes into the soul as when, for example, the great rainbow snake of aboriginal Australia drags along, trying to rid itself of its agony, or Chinese Tseng dreams of the violence that will befall him if he does not curb his pride; Awe for the gods is never lost even though they are brought within our understanding in such homely scenes as that of Atokio

sitting on a cloud playing with a ball of lightning.

Fortunately, too, the artists have been chosen and briefed with care. The illustrations never overwhelm the text, or attempt to show something which can be set forth much more powerfully to language. Instead, different cultural images are suggested by the fine work of Jerro Roy and Derek Collard, and Charles Keppel's pictures convey a sense of primeval power.

Val Biro's *Hungarian Folk Tales* brings an abrupt change of scale from Gods to People, from fearsome world-conquering dragons to a family of seven-headed dragons slitting down to a meal together. From questions of why and where, we move to the antics of poor men making good. Adversaries abound but the heroes easily overcome them by their cunning. This is a book of a very different kind and it would be wrong to let it suffer by comparison with *Gods and Men*.

It is merry from the outset, with crisp, colloquial sentences and fast-paced narrative, full of recognizable folk-tale elements. The bedside-telling tone of the dabbers suits the subject-matter well and the "word-of-mouth" tradition which Val Biro acknowledges in his introduction, together with his two major sources, is given further credence by his quiet dedication of the book to the memory of his mother. However, a larger typesize might have made the book more attractive and accessible to children, as would a greater use of diagonal spreads to enliven double pages. As it stands, the book may well attract adults who want to read it aloud rather than children who want to read it for themselves.

## Alternative universes

### By Sarah Hayes

MONICA HUGHES:  
*The Guardian of Isis*  
Hamish Hamilton. £5.25.  
0 241 10597 8

JOHN CHRISTOPHER:  
*Fireball*  
Gollancz. £4.95.  
0 575 029749

CLARE COOPER:  
*The Black Horn*  
Hodder and Stoughton. £4.95.  
0 340 25556 0

The creation of new worlds is fraught with temptation. Twin sins - leaping and moralizing - lurk in readiness to trip the unwary writer, already high on omnipotence. Monica Hughes is neither teacher nor preacher, but she has tendencies in both directions, for the most part kept under control by the power of her invention.

*The Guardian of Isis* is dense with invention: animals, landscapes, customs, ideas, mythologies. The reader has to work hard to assimilate all there is to offer, too hard perhaps in the early chapters which establish a planetary community in the final stages of regression. Three generations on the planet Isis have seen a return from a technological society to primitive tribalism ruled by superstition and taboo.

Jody Nkomo is first glimpsed jinking with a miniature water-wheel dismissed by the community as a toy. The settlers care only for hunting, keeping to the bounds of their valley, and appeasing the Guardian, a legendary figure of gold who warns the people of cosmic storms. To the President's fury it is Jody, the questioner, who finds the annual gift

from the Guardian, another unpronounceable sacred object. Jody recognizes the striped stick marked in red as a flood gauge, and is sent out of the valley for his pains to seek help from the Shining One. Leaving the valley means encountering Thul Oh Woman, the death dealer.

The character of the story changes when Jody meets not death but the Guardian, a beautiful highly sophisticated robot, and his mistress, the fascinating Olwen, once a woman now an alien adapted by the Guardian to suit the atmosphere of Isis. The pace slows, and emphasis is laid more on conversation and exposition than on detail and description. In a final burst of activity, Jody helps the Guardian to save the valley from flooding and returns to rebuild the future.

As a sequel to the remarkable *Keeper of the Isis Light*, this novel is disappointing, perhaps because it is intended as the transition stage of a trilogy. The zest of Monica Hughes's writing and her capacity for creating radiant worlds contrive, nevertheless, to weld the heterogeneous parts into an agreeable whole.

John Christopher is a splendid contrast to Monica Hughes: monochromatic, straight-forward, linear, spare, and neutral in tone where Mrs Hughes is more coloured, discursive, lush, and emotional. Not a stranger to invention, John Christopher has eschewed the creation of new worlds and chosen to restructure the old one, using the science fiction device of the alternative universe.

A fireball sends Simon and his American cousin through time and space to a parallel England, a nation still ruled by Rome. Christianity is tolerated, but Roman Europe has evolved slowly without Islam or the Americas. The boys' arrival and the precious information from another world are seen by the ambitious Bishop of London as a signal

from God for the start of a holy war. With the aid of newfangled stirrups and longbows (fuelled by zeal and some luck) the Christians overthrow the two-thousand year empire of Rome, only to impose a regime every bit as repressive as before. The boys, now men, join various expeditions on board ship bound for the red-coveted of America....

John Christopher's ideas are intriguing in isolation - the "what would have happened if?" pattern appeals at any historical watershed. But by far the most vivid and readable episode in *Fireball* is that which describes the strictly Roman world of the gladiator school. Perhaps Mr Christopher could be persuaded to forget his split-level modern consciousness and produce a full-blooded historical novel next time.

The balance between the ordinary world and the extraordinary is a delicate one to manage. In her second novel for younger readers, Clare Cooper could do with some of Alan Garner's ability to conjure up menace in everyday surroundings. *The Black Horn* updates an ancient Welsh legend which tells of a unicorn imprisoned by wizardry. Short-sighted weedy Simon turns out to have inherited powers which enable him to face the unicorn and return it to the invisible Isis. Simon's tutor, a Chinese restaurateur and cultivator of the Superior Man, is a spirited leader of the Good Squad. Sadly Evil does not have any stars, merely a bullying boy and an elderly gold-digger eager to get his hands on the unicorn's legendary jewel. The essence of a really tense good versus evil struggle set (as this book is) in the ordinary world, is that evil should be seen to be as much endemic as good is. In *The Black Horn* evil is merely an excrescence not an integral or logical part of its universe. Thus, despite efficient handling of dialogue and relationships, the story remains flawed.

## Mappable zones

### By Michael Trend

JOHN ROWE TOWNSEND:  
*The Islanders*  
Oxford University Press. £5.25.  
0 19 271449 X

GRAHAM DUNSTAN MARTIN:  
*Catchfire*  
Allen and Unwin. £4.95.  
0 04 823184 3

John Rowe Townsend's *The Islanders* and Graham Dunstan Martin's *Catchfire* are both stories for teenagers that are set in worlds created by the imagination but still - in their very different ways - familiar enough to their readers. Such stories rely heavily on their ability to build a new world of substance and detail - a convincing history, a mappable geography, often a new cosmology - and they succeed best when the authors discipline themselves strictly to stick within the frame that they have set.

Judged by this criterion John Rowe Townsend's island of Haleyon is both a convincing creation and a useful vehicle for a good story. The island is set to what we may imagine is the South Atlantic, and is almost entirely cut off from, and forgotten by, the outside world. Haleyon is the home of a small, strict puritanical community which barely ekes out a living in appalling conditions. The Islanders are, broadly speaking, followers of the laws of their founder, the Deliverer, as expounded by the leader in the Meeting-House on Prayer Day. The Reader has had the laws passed down to him verbally because, like everybody else on Haleyon, he cannot read. The laws are very cruel with regard to inconverts - would-be new arrivals; and when a group of native Islanders arrive from far over the sea the whole basis of

the island's morality is put under question by a group of the inhabitants, the leading lights of which are children and young adults. The setting and the story of *The Islanders* are not utterly impossible to believe in and the points of similarity to and of difference from the contemporary world will surely intrigue young readers.

Graham Dunstan Martin's *Catchfire*, on the other hand, is set in an imaginary world that, at first sight, is very far from the world in which we live. We are here in the realm of magic and of witchcraft, though this story also relies on juxtaposing the familiar with the unfamiliar in order to draw in the reader. The detail of the story is perhaps a little too baroque. The abundance of names is impressive evidence of an active imagination - Shrinkfold, Sneakfast, Slashbuckle, Starfall, Statishig, Spy-law, Snarewood, Seaholt (I have restricted myself to the S's even though I am most reluctant to omit Withix and Mazewit). Many children will enjoy untangling the labyrinthine mythology and those who have read *Giftnish* (to which this book is a sequel) will doubtless be at an advantage. The basic plot is fairly clear: a terrible spell threatens the existence of Feydom; the young King of Keodark, Ewan, sets out to remedy the situation. But the elaboration of the plot - constant changes of location and time, the continual introduction of new characters (often ones with amazing powers) - unbalances the sense of coherence in this book. There are also some bizarre oddities in the course of the story: Starfall is described in one passage as a "Souless automaton" (dictionary definition, "Cafeteria in which meals are provided from slot machines; slot machine"). *Catchfire* does not completely convince as a unity; it falls to draw one entirely into a new world that is a mirror of the one that we know from our own lives, and it is here that *The Islanders* particularly succeeds.

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The treatment of seals is an emotive subject. John Cloudsley-Thompson, describing the life and practices of the various types of the genus, does not dodge the issues of culling and conservation, but he writes in a realistic fashion, neither oversentimentalizing nor denying that "the seal's worst enemy is Man".

The elubbing of seal pups, notionally to protect fish stocks, and the gonoral slaughtering for skins,

blubber or animal food, is a subject which will doubtless upset many young readers. The point is made, however, that more and more pet dogs mean fewer and fewer seals. "Everyone who keeps a dog and feeds it on tinned meat ought to know where that meat comes from". So one lesson among several is interwoven in a text which covers the evolution of pinnipeds, the way the modern species live and the wonders of migration. Photographs in good natural colours, add point to the account.

The photographs in *Gorillas*, another addition to the Animals of the World series, also merit special mention. Anthony Wootton sagely emphasizes that the gorilla, far from being the dangerous aggressive animal of fiction and film, is a mild-mannered, gentle creature, never attacking unless deliberately provoked. Another popular idea dispelled is that gorillas spend most of their time up in trees; in fact day-time searching for food and night-time sleeping is more likely to be on the ground. Their habits and habitat are intriguingly detailed in a most pleasant book.

The other two books, on gulls and rabbits, have a common pattern. The life cycle from chick or baby, through growth to maturity, mating and new birth is explained with a concise authority. Once again, the illustrations are outstanding, admirably complementing the text. The writing, too, is of a remarkably high standard, with an apt choice of voca-

bulary and a clear explanation of the day-to-day behaviour of the individual bird or animal, and its relationship to its surroundings and with other creatures. There are notes on observation techniques, and lists of books for further reading.

This new series of picture books comes from the British Museum (Natural History), and may be regarded as part of the activities commemorating the centenary of the establishment of the museum in South Kensington, London. The vicissitudes of the Natural History Museum, before and since its move from Bloomsbury, have made exciting reading in a number of recent volumes. It is obvious that the museum is not resting on its well-merited laurels, but intends to develop still further its aims of disseminating knowledge and of associating pleasure and enjoyment with learning about nature, with that word most broadly defined. This series splendidly fits into all this. The books are written by members of the museum's staff and checked by its specialists; and the artists work in association with the staff.

The results are now to be seen and admired. If older generations shudder to find that thirty-two pages, even when printed to the highest standards and bound in good hard covers, cost almost £5, young readers with their different ideas of money values will be in no way deterred from acquiring the books. And they will be very lucky to have them.

## A tale to tell

By Alan Brownjohn

BRIAN PATTEN (Editor):  
Gangsters, Ghosts and Dragonflies  
199pp. Allen & Unwin. £6.95.  
0 04 6210536

In the realm of poetry anthologies for children bright new titles have been known to conceal dull old mixtures. Brian Patten's collection of story poems is named (and illustrated on its dust-jacket) in an eye-catching way, and it may not be literally and entirely about the three categories mentioned. But this is no false mask; the book offers an enthralling jumble of word tales, scarcely any of them over-familiar, which manages never to be conventional or boring. The hope is that it may bridge a gap between the younger reader and the adult, and perhaps it is this which has led to a distinctly surreal and "adult" note in the fantasy poems chosen; alarm is always lurking round the corner in, for example, the ruthless rhymes of Dennis Lee or the harsh tones of Christopher Logue. But nearly all of the poems - almost all of which are at least fairly new - could be understood, some after a little fruitful puzzling, by older children without any special experience in the decoding of contemporary verse.

The poems which have become, deservedly, modest children's classics in their own way already, are easy to spot. Vernon Scannell's "Hide and Seek" and George MacBeth's "Bed-time Story" score with a sureness of content, timing and form which some of the new poems here do not have (the poet with the best story to tell and the best ear for putting it into verse that will be remembered, will produce the poems that survive). Alan Dixon's quatrains on the hunting of "The wild Yorkshire pudding"

*More Stuff and Nonsense* (Collins, £3.95, 0 00 184398 2) follows an earlier collection with the not totally unexpected title of *Stuff and Nonsense*, also edited by the compiler of this instalment, the Michael Dugan who subscribes to the belief enshrined in the couplet which stands as epigraph to this book: "Of nonsense and stuff / You can't have enough". I felt this to be an overstatement even before reading the book, which did little to alter my conviction.

The "stuff" is mainly that of a bestiary - fantastic animals needing only the slightest prompting to accommodate the most improvisatory and pointless "nonsense" which is here, almost exclusively a species of pure whimsy, with only an occasional note of something grimmer or more robust ("When Billy set his aunt on fire / He squealed with great delight, / 'Look how auntie's burning. Dad, / It makes the room so bright."). If the prevailing tone and temper have a disappointingly uniform air, the

are appealing, but may just miss it. We jump on and snuff 'em; They shriek as we catch 'em; On cords which take twenty We string and attach 'em. They dry them in Bailey; They can them in likley. You will find they are served Where menus are stately.

This cheerful idea deserves infallible rhyming. But Libby Houston's "The Dragonfly" and "The Kitchen Girl's Task" are in turn factually absorbing about the insect, and intriguingly cryptic about the skivvy for whom the prince never came:

A demon took over Frank, chef at the caté on the motorway; arms akimbo, as midnight drew, he Summons one of the girls, says:

I want you to count the tealeaves we've used here today and I'll wait for the right answer.

The prince could not wait, he left her...

These are poems which not only will be picked up by other anthologists, but ought to be.

Brian Patten's fun choices give us John Lennon, Neil Innes, Adrian Henri and Roger MacDougall among others; and the acknowledged poets unmistakably rise above the rest. Ivor Cutler seems to be represented by less than his best; he can be both more mordant and more hilarious than this, and still (or more) suitable for children. The editor has chosen boldly from Stevie Smith and Ted Hughes (humans rather than animals), and discovered less-used poems by Pablo Narada and Kenneth Patchen which provide both originality and a note of seriousness. Terry Oakes swishes, in his illustrations, from a harsh cartoonist's line to a fine in misty fantasy, but these black-and-white drawings complement a stimulating anthology of poems, rather than dominate it (as can happen) with obtrusive visual experiment.

actual forms have even more of one: there is barely any deviation from iambic tetrameter lines and *abab* quatrains. All of which gives the verse a curiously old-fashioned feel. Edward Lear, crossed with some rather less exciting talents. These, or so the notes on contributors tell us, are all Australian, though except for one "fair dinkum", they are so without a hint of Clivio or Dame Edna. In only one instance is their note of vigorous absurdity struck: Wilbur G. Howcroft's "The Mugwump Bird":

He never plays, but sits for days (Each one the same as the other) Alop a slump, one side his wump. His mug upon the other.

This said, the poems - and even more so the splendid drawings by Roland Harvey - will be enjoyed by all but the most demanding of young children beginning to "get the feel" of verse; though I can't help thinking that the simplest Robert Frost lyrics would hold more fascination for them.

Alan Jenkins

## commentary

### Elizabethan doublets

By Stanley Wells

Titus Andronicus  
The Two Gentlemen of Verona  
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford

Most renders and playgoers, asked to name Shakespeare's worst tragedy and comedy, would be likely to choose *Titus Andronicus* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Admittedly, both plays include fine poetry; both have strong dramatic situations; both display Shakespeare's emergent genius for characterization. In recent times, both have provoked eloquent critical defence in the face of earlier denigration and neglect. Appreciation of *Titus Andronicus* has been enhanced by discussion of its relationship to Ovid, of its Senecanism, of its place in the development of English tragedy. We have been taught to view the comedy more sympathetically by seeing it within the context of the Renaissance debate about the respective claims of friendship and love, and by examination of its structure and its verbal counterpoint.

But difficulties remain, especially for the director who has the task of showing the plays at their best to audiences which must include many non-specialists. The horrors of *Titus Andronicus*, and the apparent disjunction between violent deeds and meditative verbal expression or response, require the most delicate handling: if they are not to seem crudely melodramatic, or absurd in their artificiality. Characterization in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is so slight that actors must feel they are required to make bricks with little straw. One of the gentlemen behaves so badly, and the other is such an ass, that they seem undeserving of the sympathy demanded for them at the conclusion; and important moments are so underwritten as to defy credulity.

So it is a brave director who undertakes either play; and though the Royal Shakespeare Company acknowledges a duty to perform even Shakespeare's least popular plays from time to time, to present both of them in one evening might seem to be passing beyond valour into indiscretion. Fears that this might be so were not allayed by a late postponement of the press night, and a sudden substitution of the performer in the role of Creb.

In the event, it is to everyone's credit that the first night went as well as it did. John Barton has chosen to stress the plays' Elizabethanism, and their theatricality. The same actors play in both; though with a big part in one play have a small one in the other. There are suggestions of a group of touring players. A placard names both plays, in the opposite order to that in which they are performed; the programme, too, suggests that the comedy will precede the tragedy. In the manner of recent productions here and elsewhere, the playing area is greatly reduced; it is defined by coat-racks bearing costumes and a make-up mirror. Five property baskets, which can be variously re-arranged, and, to stage left, a scaffolding that can serve as an upper level, for Titus's study "above", or Silvia's tower. A great net swings down to bring the heavens forward, too. Before the performance begins, actors fraternize with the audience in a mood that is a danger of becoming morbid.

The title of each play is declaimed, as are opening stage directions - perhaps to make sure we know what our consciousness of theatricality. The actors are visible throughout, including a scene; they retreat into the background and watch the action seriously and sympathetically. In the tragedy, the device has a controlling effect on our emotions; Lavinia, carried off unconsensually, would tear a passion to ratters, but develops into a psychological study of self-indulgent, historical, fundamentally insecure tyranny. Sheila Hancock complements this with her tight-lipped, gloatingly malevolent Tamora.

The method is epitomized in Patrick Stewart's Titus. Grizzled, moustached, worn, bald, and carrying a stick, he is entirely credible as an old soldier, less so as a candidate for the imperial throne. Yet he rises with real power to the rhetoric of suffering; the performance is intelligently sustained, despite a tendency to the monotonous. It is fine that he responds to the role's demands for overly expressive acting, but a touch more inwardness, even if achieved by understatement, would not cumo amiss.

The horrors are not shirked, though Hugh Quarshie's Aaron, though avoiding cantankerous, lacks dramatic edge. Chiron (Colin Tennant) and Demetrius (Roger Allam) convince us of their sadistic lust, knocking Lavinia unconscious on Chiron's words "I'll stop your mouth". After their attack on her, Leonie Mellinger's Lavinia, "her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out, and ravished", is a pathetically pop-eyed, compulsively shuddering figure. As in Trevor Nunn's 1972 production, I found most affecting the tableaux of grief which in the reading seem most artificial. Playing Lavinia's uncle, Marcus, Ray Jewers makes a deep impression with his quiet, stunned delivery of his elegantly descriptive speeches. Moving too, is the coming together in suffering of the mutilated father and daughter, culminating in her acceptance of his killing her by dislocating her neck. The final holocaust leaves us appalled rather than moved; like the few surviving characters, we have suffered full with horrors.

After the interval, the comedy, Nick Blyth's brazen flourishes and harsh, percussive fanfares give way to lyrical measures on woodwind and plucked strings. Christopher Morley's setting, essentially unchanged, adapts well to the new mood. The production is modest, charming, and sensitive to the play's weaknesses. The gentlemen, for once, seem really

raped on her husband's corpse, revives as the actress in the midstage shadows.

If the performers are members of a touring company, Barton must be thought to have cast himself as their manager, one who, like his Elizabethan counterparts, has no scruples about altering the text. Like them, he is short of actors; no extras are available for crowd scenes. We stand in for the Roman populace (as, the text hints, Shakespeare may have meant his audience to do, too); the visible presence of the "resting" members of the company pleasantly peopled the stage in scenes which might otherwise have seemed too sparsely populated - though it is arguable that in the tragedy, at least, austerity would have been more fitting. Costumes are splendid; property trees are used to good effect; hobby-horses, if a little quaint, imaginatively suggest journeys; skilful lighting contributes to the constantly pleasing stage pictures.

Barton's way with the text here is not that of his Ciceronian adaptations of *Henry VI* and *King John*. He has boiled down but not fudged up. Cuts are extensive - 850 lines of *Titus*, 515 of *The Two Gentlemen* - but they are mostly "internal", within speeches. Before getting too hot under the collar about them, we may do well to recall that the only production of *Titus* to have set the Avon on fire - Peter Brooks's, with Laurence Olivier as Titus, in 1955 - used an adapted text from which over 650 lines had been excised.

All the same, the omissions are more damaging to the tragedy than to the comedy. Amplification is an essential rhetorical device in *Titus Andronicus*; to reduce it overemphasizes the action, detracts from its steady-paced grandeur, its sombre mediocrity. In general, Barton compensates for the conscious theatricality of his setting with naturalism in the acting, rather than aiming at the formal, emblematic stylization which has worked best in earlier productions. Admittedly, it is a naturalism which can encompass rhetoric, even rant. Bernard Lloyd's gentle Saturnine begins with a volubility which at first I thought intended as a caricature of those who

would tear a passion to ratters, but develops into a psychological study of self-indulgent, historical, fundamentally insecure tyranny. Sheila Hancock complements this with her tight-lipped, gloatingly malevolent Tamora.

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young, so are more easily forgiven. Peter Land plays an initially soppy Proteus, but finds a way to convey shame and bewilderment at the unexpected shift in his emotions. Peter Cheelson's ongoing Valentine, full of boyish charm and innocent youthfully pleased with himself, has the right mixture of comedy and romance, and develops into the most interesting character. The moment of his banishment, when he kneels to John Frinklyn-Robbins's enterprising, strongly characterized Emperor, introduces a new dimension of seriousness; in the final scene, the genuineness of his concern for both Silvia and Proteus carries us surprisingly well through the notoriously difficult denouement.

If we are less involved with the objects of the gentlemen's affection, it is because Diana Hardcastle's cold Silvia seems well able to look after herself, while Julia Swift is unsympathetically hysteric in Julia's earlier scenes, and too stolidly emotional in her later ones. Geoffrey Hutchings's Lance seems infected with the sourness of which he complains in his dog, but makes a good foil to the wholly delightful Speed of Joseph Marcell, who conveys a natural warmth and ebullience which illuminatingly humanizes the often dry wordplay. Not much is to be done with the outlaws, but to have one of them played, by Sheila Hancock, as a sex-sympod woman who takes a fancy to Valentine, only to find that he "bears, an honourable mind/And will not use a woman lawlessly", creates innocent if irrelevant diversion.

Double bills have an honourable history. The Greeks had their satyr plays, the Elizabethans their jigs, the Victorians their farcical afterpieces. This Stratford evening lacks the elements of complete contrast, the suggestion of a necessary escape from high seriousness into frivolity, characteristic of most earlier examples. Nor does juxtaposition of the two plays east unexpected illumination upon either. But the evening works well as a celebration of the varied talents of the dramatist and his performers, and you do get two plays - or most of two plays - for the price of one.

### Social mobility

By S. N. Plaice

Mask: Scenes from the Heroic Life of the Middle Classes  
Gate Theatre, Notting Hill

Lois Stein's ambitious adaptation of Carl Sternheim's trilogy of plays, charting the rise of three generations of the Maske family in the years preceding the First World War, is faithful to the German dramatist's policy of interrupting his social satire with static, Expressionist images that lodge to the memory by virtue of their incongruity with the general comic tone.

The young wife of a minor civil servant loses her knickers while awaiting to watch the Kaiser's procession in the Zoological Gardens in Berlin. The first play *Die Hoss* (mytically translated as *The Underpants*) opens with a frozen image of her husband Theobald in the act of beating her for her carelessness, which may cost him his job and social standing. But from this Expressionist opening, the tone switches, immediately into domestic farce. Two infatuated admirers, witnesses of the scandalous event, enter the house as lodgers. The result is a familiar succession of opening and closing doors and attempted seductions.

In the second play, *The Snob*, Christian Maske, who is intriguing,

his way into the aristocracy, continues the tradition of "inconspicuous uniformity" established by his father Theobald. But to order to rid himself of the embarrassment of his pebble-bogged background, he is now forced to buy off both his vulgar father and the mistress who has introduced him into high society. A weaker farce ensues when Christian seeks to screen his father from Count Pelen, whose daughter he wishes to marry. At the end of the play, Christian retells the story of his mother's knickers, romanticizing it for his own ends and transforming the lodgers into the painter Renoir and a French viscount, in order to convince his wife that he is in fact the viscount's bastard son.

In the final play, simply entitled *1913*, all the earlier elements of farce have disappeared, to be replaced by stark Expressionist melodrama (Sternheim called it a "Sebaupspiel" rather than a "Komödie"). Christian Maske is now an enormously rich, aged baron confined to a wheel-chair and very close to death. His two younger children have been spoiled by his wealth and have degenerated into a "Sebaupspiel" for a roller-skating debutante. Christian is involved in a bitter struggle with his eldest daughter Sophie, who is trying to wrest his financial power from him. The family is consumed by rivalry, and the atmosphere of the house is further divided by the clandestine socialist activities of Christian's secretary Key, a classic Expressionist figure.

fiercely opposed to the burgeoning materialism of the German middle classes.

This development from farce to vituperative melodrama is skilfully reflected in Wallace Holm's sets for the three plays, shifting from a naturalistic domestic interior to an impressionistic salon and finally to the lugubrious apocalyptic decor of the baron's house. The company of seven is used to versatile effect, especially Anthony Head in the contrasting roles of the aristocratic aesthete and the intense secretary. John Abbott sustains the three taxing central roles and convincingly effects the transformation from plausible petit-bourgeois to social climber and then to mummified baron.

The last two parts of the trilogy come as something of a anti-climax after the satirical humour and tight construction of *Die Hoss*. This is not necessarily a fault of the production. Sternheim's vision of pre-war Germany became increasingly bleak (the trilogy was written between 1910-14), a change reflected in the sombre development of the plays.

Eric Bentley's translation has worn well. It is good to see a theatre capitalizing on his pioneering work in bringing German dramatists of the early twentieth century to the attention of an English audience. *Mask*, continues the Gate's laudable policy of reviving neglected foreign plays and Sternheim's trilogy deserves to be rediscovered.

### New Oxford books: Literature

#### The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse

Edited by Donald Davie

This new anthology ranges widely from the earliest anonymous Anglo-Saxon poetry through Donne, Milton, Edward Taylor, and Emily Dickinson, to T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, John Betjeman, and C.H. Sisson. Herbert Vaughan, Smart and Cowper are fully represented as 'the masters of the sacred poem in English', and there are a number of hymns by those two great hymn-writers, Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley. £7.95 24 September

#### Collected Poems

D.J. Enright

Though not literally a 'complete poem', this *Collected Poems* assembles all the work of D.J. Enright which he has published since 1953 and 1975, the three major sequences in their entirety: *The Terrible Shears*, *Paradise Illustrated*, and *A Feast Book*; and also a group of new poems. £10 24 September

#### The Life of Villiers de l'Isle Adam

A.W. Raitt

Of all the great French writers of the nineteenth century, Villiers de l'Isle Adam had perhaps the most extraordinary life. He led a tragicomic existence, from his birth in an eccentric family of impoverished Bretons in 1838 to his death in Paris in 1889. His story is recounted here in full for the first time. £25

#### Le Menagier de Paris

A Critical Edition

by the late  
Georgine E. Brereton  
and Janet M. Ferrier

*Le Menagier de Paris*, written c. 1393, is now offered for the first time in a critical edition. It was composed by an elderly, prosperous bourgeois for his young bride, to teach her to be an exemplary wife. The introduction includes details on the author and his wife, his sources and his treatment of them, and his language and style. £35

#### Lessing and the Drama

F.J. Lampert

This book surveys Lessing's lifelong engagement with the practice and theory of dramatic writing, seeking to understand his plays in the light of his literary intentions and of the tradition of dramatic writing in which he wrote. The book is published in the bicentenary year of Lessing's death. £15

#### Oxford University Press

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## Fantastical fantasy for when the nights draw in

KNIGHT



**SPELL ME A WITCH**  
Barbara Willard  
At Belladonna Agrimony's Academy for Young Witches, inaccurate 'spelling' proves disastrous... A deliciously funny story.  
Age: 9 plus

### A WALK IN WOLF WOOD

Mary Stewart 95p  
Two children travel through time in order to lift a sinister medieval enchantment. In this new adventure from the author of *The Little Broomstick* and *Ludo and the Star Horse*.  
"Mary Stewart weaves her spell deftly, as ever."  
Daily Telegraph  
Age: 9 plus

### THE OLD NURSERY STORIES

E. Nesbitt 95p  
These retellings of such well-known fairy stories as *Cinderella*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *The Sleeping Beauty* have a freshness, wit and charm that will endear them to all children.  
Age: 7-10 years



## commentary

## The selection collection

By Redmond O'Hanlon

Origin of Species  
Natural History Museum

In a massive permanent exhibition designed to celebrate its centenary, the British Museum (Natural History) has expanded a hundred years of experience in educational display with characteristic virtuosity. On the upper floor, opposite a case full of the simplest and most elegant of all natural selectors, the big cats, a short corridor admits the visitor into a light, high-ceilinged and richly carpeted gallery now transformed into a fairground: there are red metallic tents in which one may decimate whole populations of disadvantaged dark mice on television screens; wooden igloos where films, animated cartoons, philosophical chat shows and audio-visual displays run constantly; whole amusement arcades of ingenious question-and-answer machines; and walls of more conventional exhibits which wind amongst Alfred Waterhouse's original and splendid contents, themselves decorated with all manner of whimsical beasts.

Towering panelled collages of photographs, with representative real specimens from the greatest natural history collections in the world, visually state the initial problem. How did this overwhelming variety of animals and plants, from the unicellular organism to the ciliated worm on the ocean floor, to the hooded cobra or the Sumatran tiger, come to be as they are? The extraordinary forms and personal devices of an Indian pangolin, like a monstrously purposeful fir cone; a hairy tree porcupine; a beaver offering his paddle for your attention; a Bateleur Eagle, savagely regarding us over his shoulder; and an impassive Eagle Owl outstaring every admiring eye—all these silently ask us to choose between natural theology and natural selection. And, just in case such an assemblage is altogether too exotic, an English kestrel hovers in the windless space above our heads, while two male shovellers fly curving into, but never quite reach, an English lake somewhere in our sight.

Across this wealth of images two legends are inscribed. Above a black and white picture of a puffin, whose great beak is nevertheless plain in its full breeding colours, we are told: "One view is... all living things have developed by a process of gradual change over a very long period of time. This is what we mean by evolution." To the right, above an anxious young man who is presumably off to a fundamentalist graduate school in Alabama, we are reminded: "Another view is... God created all living things perfect and unchanging. He created each one for a special purpose. This is the basis of the doctrine of Creation." But here, in the extreme left hand corner, there rises the quizzical and subversive head of the Stinkhorn *Phallus impudicus*, complete with a fly at its tip.

At the start of the exhibition proper, an aged Charles Darwin sits reading in his study in Down House, a life-size photographic enlargement of one corner of which appropriately shows us the sorted ranks of specially carpentered pigeon holes in which he placed his loose sheaves of notes under various headings. The rest of the exhibition brings the early contents of these seemingly innocuous wooden files to life and invites us to take the simplest possible walk through the great man's complex preoccupations.

We begin, like Darwin, by contemplating the dog lying at our fireside. Domestic, artificial selection of prized characteristics has certainly produced dramatic changes. Make a mere terrier with Attozed Frederick the Great (a preserved three-year-old beagle dog presented to the museum in 1979 by Mr George Walsh and looking as if he, personally, would prefer to amputate your leg rather than suffer such an indignity), suitably interbreed his

offspring for several generations, and you would eventually produce a Staffordshire Bull Terrier. But differences may also be relatively subtle. A chunky proto-sausage dog of 1875 is still obviously akin to the low level frankfurter dachshund of 1975.

So how are species made in wilder nature? Once again we are asked to look first at the immediate and familiar, the garden pond and its water boatmen; the weaselly distinguished and stonily different family of the *Mustelidae*; the onions, leeks, garlic and chives of our vegetable garden; and, just to prove that it is not a wholly academic matter, a few False Blushers and Fly Agnites and the odd Death Cap. And then, by way of demonstrating that specific difference may be indicated by other means, music is provided for the entire exhibition by the specific songs of otherwise almost identical looking (and equally tireless) chiff chaffs and willow warblers.

Unpleasant necessities like death and competition of one kind or another are cheerily illustrated with a cartoon of the Serengeti, trunk to tail with elephants. The consequent struggle is depicted with the help of a rabbit, very snug, in its cut-away burrow in the English chalk downland, temporarily unaware of the Common blue, the Small tortoise-shell, the Woodmouse, the Roman snail and the eutize, award-winning, impossibly shiny British Museum (Natural History) woodlice above its head. A very peppy mole rabbit appears to be finding the battle for food, for space in suitable surroundings, and for young brown-eyed females entirely to his taste.

As Darwin wrote, "our ignorance of the laws of variation is profound." But it is less profound than it was in 1859, and Darwin would probably have given a good twenty years' supply of snuff (his one discernible vice) for a chance to play a Mendelian game with the coat colour of shorthorn cattle; to study the modern implications of the inheritance of haemophilia amongst Queen Victoria's descendants; to add the genetic relationship between resistance to malaria and the possession of sickle cell anaemia to the huge amount of intricate accumulated evidence with which he held up his initial, simple idea.

He would have been delighted, too, with the more familiar, less mathematical demonstration of the varying fortunes of two different forms of the Peppered moth (a soot-coloured mutant, first spotted in Manchester in 1848, is now dominant in industrial areas); with the astonishing series of Dandelion butterflies illustrating Batesian mimicry; and with the dramatic new research by the Museum's own scientists into the possible mechanisms which produced the two hundred distinct but similar species of cichlid fishes in Lake Victoria in East Africa, a process directly analogous to the effects of isolation on small populations of Darwin's Galapagos finches, whose evolving beaks are here celebrated with an accompanying array of nutcrackers, tweezers and pliers.

This is a brilliantly selected and organized exhibition, well supported with its own small book, *Origin of Species*, jointly published by the Museum and Cambridge University Press (£12 hardback 0 521 23878 1, £3.95 paperback 0 521 28276 4).



## Heartbeats in the void

By Brian Powell

Iroha: Life of Change  
Court Theatre, Holland Park

Percussion is part of Japanese life. Away from the pop music blaring from the loudspeakers of the urban pin-ball parlours, the sounds in the environment of the Japanese are mainly rhythmic and monotonous rather than melodic. The festival and religious festivals as the only holidays in the pre-modern period were attended by all the local population—uses only the drum or the bell. The no drama, which was popular entertainment at festivals, sets its music to three drums and a flute. In kabuki the progress of the performance is marked by one set of clappers, while the dramatic climaxes are accentuated by another. There is virtually no dawn chorus in Japan, and the Westerner misses it. In the heat of the day there is the uninterrupted chatter of the cicadas instead, and the Japanese misses that here. It was in Japan that someone had the idea of mass-producing tapes of human heartbeats to soothe fretful babies.

Given this, it is not surprising that Japan has produced one of the world's greatest percussionists and exponents of percussion-based drama, Satoru Yamashita. The percussion of *Iroha*, Yamashita's recent production at the Court Theatre in Holland Park, could only have come from him. The sonorous temple bell was there, the cicadas, the human heart, the clappers, all fused into a rather less varied whole than in the past, but unique none the less. One missed the richness of instrumentation of *The Man from the East*, but Yamashita has not lost his capacity to create chord and percussion combinations that one feels cannot conceivably be improved upon.

The title Yamashita chose for his

new show is given the English subtitle, *Life of Change*. *I-ro-ha* are the first three syllables of a poem which contains all the forty-seven elements of the Japanese phonetic syllabary. The poem itself, Buddhist in inspiration, stresses the transience of life and urges the reader to free himself from the physical world and its vicissitudes by overcoming its temptations and uniting with the absolute. *Iroha* portrays in dance form the struggle between the Buddhist forces of good and evil. A succession of male and female characters then enters one by one, and each acts out the crisis in his or her life. In front sits a priest, shaking the beads of his rosary, chanting his sutras and practicing exorcism by fire. Green laser beams flicker overhead, spotlights from the stage and clouds of artificial smoke billow upwards. The priest is equal to the power of evil and steadfast in the face of its attacks. His novice, however, has not reached that plane of serenity and through the performance his dancing symbolizes his own personal struggle and the severity of Buddhist discipline. Perhaps Yamashita is showing us some of the trials which he himself experienced during his recent retreats.

Traditional elements are plentiful. The performing area, with its large central stage and passageways leading off to right and left, is modelled on the temple where *Iroha* was first performed, and the small pine trees planted at intervals in front of these passageways suggest the no theatre. No was the drama form most closely associated with Buddhism, especially Zen, and Yamashita has used many of its external features. He may have gone further than this. The programme and publicity mention *Bugaku* and a famous fire festival, but much of *Iroha* is reminiscent of the no drama *Aoi no Ue*. This play, highly dramatic even in the refined style of private performance that developed in the early fifteenth century, has a climactic dance scene of exorcism.

On the stage lies a kimono symbolizing a young woman near to death through evil possession. Around her, in a hideous mask, dances the jealous spirit of the lady who has been forsaken for her. The spirit is quelled by a priest plying his rosary and intoning spells.

Which is more dramatic is hard to say. In neither case do the words matter. The words of the priest's chant in the no play are unintelligible to most and in *Iroha*, as in *The Man from the East*, Yamashita himself uses a language that is near Japanese but not understandable as such. As a spectator it is difficult to become involved with what one is seeing and hearing on a no stage. One's experience of Satoru Yamashita, however, leads one to have quite different expectations. In the past he has taken them that concern everybody and set our ears and minds ringing with their implications. The Hiroshima sequence of *The Man from the East* was quite terrifying. Salvation and damnation and the hopes and fears of mankind concern us no less, and one expects to come changed from seeing Yamashita's presentation of them. But he keeps us at arm's length in *Iroha*. The straight rows of seats are well back from the stage. The loudspeakers are all in front of us. Festivals in Japan are participatory, but we were not allowed to participate in this one. Yamashita's music has moved people profoundly before, and perhaps we could have hoped that, even if only for a moment, we could feel our spirits leap away to the void. Yamashita disappointed us. The Court Theatre and the void were too neatly joined by his green lasers for there to be much scope for our spirits. I came away from *Iroha* feeling that I had simply been watching a show, and hoping that Yamashita would next time succeed once again in combining the Japanese and Western experience to shake his audience's consciousness.

Commentary continues on page 1083.

## Among this week's contributors

LOUIS ALLEN is a lecturer in French at the University of Durham.

GEORGE BEST's most recent book is *Humility in Warfare*, 1980. He is working on a book on war and society in revolutionary Europe.

NICHOLAS BEST's novel *Where Were You at Waterloo?* will be published shortly.

JEREMY CATTO is a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

RICHARD COMAS is editor of the British Film Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin*.

PATRICIA CRAIG's critical study, *The Lady Investigators: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction*, a collaboration with Mary Cadogan, was published earlier this year.

NICHOLAS DAVIDSON is a lecturer in History at the University of Leicester.

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* will be published later this year.

CHRISTOPHER HILL was Master of Balliol College, Oxford from 1965 to 1978. His books include *The World Turned Upside Down*, 1972, and *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, 1980.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of French History at University College London. His books include *A Concise History of France*, 1970.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published next year.

JAMES KIRKUP teaches Comparative Literature at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. His recent books include *Dengonban Messages: One-line Poems*, 1981.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

HERMONIE LEE's *Elizabeth Bowen: An Estimation* will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the TLS.

MARY LUTYENS's books include *Milady and the Russian*, 1976, *Krishnamurti*, 1975, and a recent memoir of her father, Edwin Lutyens.

HELEN MCNEIL is a lecturer in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

RICHARD MAYNE's books include *The Recovery of Europe*, 1970, and a translation of Jean Monnet's *Memoirs*, 1978.

VENETIA NEWALL's books include *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Magic*, 1974. She is the editor of *International Folklore Review*.

S. N. PLATON's latest translation is of Tankred Dorst's *Merlin*.

BRIAN POWELL is a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He is writing a book on the modern Japanese playwright, Mayama Seika.

BRYAN RANFT was Professor of History at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, from 1966 to 1977.

DAVID RIDGWAY is joint editor of *Italy Before the Romans*, 1979.

MICHAEL ROSE is Assistant Director of the British Archaeological Expedition to Iran and a Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford.

PAT ROOBER's books include *The Augustan Vision*, 1974, and *Henry Fielding*, 1979.

JOHN ROOSTER is lecturer in Modern History at Durham University and editor of the new journal *Parliament, Estates and Representation*.

K. G. REAGAN's books include *The Abolition of Man*, 1974.

VARNON SCANNELL's *New and Collected Poems 1950-1980* was published last year.

PETER STEAD is a lecturer in History at University College of Swansea.

STUART SUTHERLAND is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex.

A. J. P. TAYLOR's recent books include *Revolutions and Revolutionaries and Historians, Socialists and Politicians*, both 1980.

JULIAN TREUHEIT is Keeper of Fine Art at Manchester City Art Gallery.

J. B. TRAPP edited *The Apology of Sir Thomas More*, 1979.

GILLIAN TINGALL's most recent novel is *The Intruder*, 1979.

JEREMY WALORON is a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

J. F. WATKINS is Professor of Medical Microbiology at the Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.

STANLEY WEINTRAUB's most recent book is *The London Yankees*, 1979.

## The Historical Novel

Sir, — It was a pleasant surprise to see half a page of the TLS (August 28) devoted to that neglected (if marketable) commodity, the historical novel, but a disappointment to find Robert Hewison's approach so negative. After conceding that in a cold climate for the modern novel there is still profit in historical ones, he devotes most of his review to such destructive criticism of the genre in general and his nine subjects in particular that one ends by wondering why the vulgar things sell at all.

Mr Hewison has some very odd views about the historical novel. According to him, they are always historically inaccurate, and should therefore properly be called history-novels. I only know two of the authors he reviews, but I would defy him to find a major inaccuracy in Jess Stubbs or C. Northcote Parkinson. Too much, rather than too little history is often the failing of the modern historical novel, which, I suppose, is what Mr Hewison means when he says that "history removes the need for invention, so the narrator can concentrate on inventions".

But why does history remove the need for invention? Having, interestingly, conceded that it is possible to place any modern fictional genre in a historical setting, Mr Hewison goes on to the amazing conclusion that setting somehow entails an entire absence of character, plot and style. I would have said that the strength (and success) of the historical novel lay exactly in the fact that at least one of the three elements of the modern novel, it is an allowable virtue in historical ones. The stress between historical time and characters' time, between background and plot, is one of the fruitful problems of these books. I suppose *War and Peace* is the classic example of this. And would Mr Hewison really argue that there is no character in *War and Peace*? Or in *Henry Emme*? Or in *The Birds Fall Down*? Or in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*?

Coming back, later, to plot, Mr Hewison admits that a hero and a heroine are necessary evils of the historical novel, and often achieve a happy (or fairy-story) ending. Has he, perhaps, put his finger here on the answer to a question posed earlier in his article? What satisfactions, he asked, are there in writing or reading the things? Well, one of the satisfactions is the achievement of a happy ending. This has become almost impossible in a modern novel, except in the saccharine (if significantly successful) terms of Mills and Boon. But there are, in fact, happy moments in people's lives. By focusing on one of these, a happy ending becomes possible. By setting it in the past, it becomes believable. I expect Figaro's Count got into Susanna's bed pretty soon after the marriage, but that is neither here nor there in the opera. Jane Austen summed up the happy-ending problem in *Persuasion* when she described the happiness of Anne and Captain Wentworth: "His profession was all that could ever make her friends wish [her] war, all that could dim her sunshine". But, for the moment, they were happy.

Humankind cannot bear very much reality. Books on the royal wedding are still selling like ice cream in August. If the historical novel can make happy endings respectable, good for it. If the reader picks up a little history *en passant*, so much the better. One of Mr Hewison's criticisms is that "the sourcebook is unlikely to challenge conventional historical judgments". It is hardly his job, surely? And, oddly enough, when one of the authors under review does take a mildly idiosyncratic line, Mr Hewison at once accuses him of using twentieth-century devices, as, for instance, the outsider as hero, or the liberated woman as heroine. Twentieth-

century? They are surely as old as the novel.

Concern for style, according to him, is "rigidly excluded by the demands of naturalism". Why? One of the difficult pleasures of writing historical novels is trying to achieve a language, both in narrative and in dialogue, that will suggest the historical period without alienating, or, worse still, boring the reader. Mary Renault and George Trevelyan both succeeded superbly at this in their very different ways.

Mr Hewison comes at last to the only one of the novels that he seems to have managed to enjoy at all. It is *Long Day at Shiloh*, which, he says, has no hero and no plot, but a great deal of style: "The invented dialogue with its onomatopoeic spelling bongs the material alive". It sounds remarkably like a modern novel. Perhaps Mr Hewison would be happier, and more constructive, reviewing those.

JANE AIKEN HODGE,  
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## Poetry and Esperanto

Sir, — George Szirtes's suggestion of an analogy for the joint effort of Octavio Paz and Charles Tomlinson (September 4) is perceptive — more so to the potentialities of Esperanto than its achievements, which can hardly compare with those of either poet. The quoted lines indeed translate readily:

Domu farita de memor' el si,  
komp-interprete blanka — pli pensite  
de vive, pli dirita de penalo,  
domo dabra dum la propra son'...

But I agree that Montale is better.

KRIS LONG,  
85 Point Roynl, Bracknell, Berks.

Sir, — As a poet whose language is Esperanto I take serious exception to George Szirtes's sentence (September 4): "But in tackling archetypal themes they have committed themselves to a kind of poetic Esperanto". This is plainly intended to be derogatory, as witness the word "archetypal" in the following sentence: "A kind of poetic Esperanto". Indeed, it means, I suppose, a kind of unpoetic English. It is obvious your reviewer has never read any Esperanto poetry, which makes his comment intellectually and morally dishonest, and until he has read some of our best poets he should desist from making such judgments.

W. AULD,  
20 Harvestoun Road, Dollar, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, FK14 7HG.

## The 'Athenian Society'

Sir, — In his review of A. B. England's *Energy and Order in the Poetry of Swift* (September 4) Claude Rawson feels that Swift's "Ode to the Athenian Society" contains lines "which can be suspected of some element of mockery of the Athenian Society itself, though its main drift is eulogistic". This may reflect Swift's own embarrassment for his wholehearted approval of the Society in the Ode, when he learned that the men he had praised so highly were hacks. Swift was certainly fervent in his admiration of the Society, even if his admiration was short-lived; not only did he sign and date his poem (a very rare occurrence), but he wrote to his cousin Thomas Swift that as a result of the poem's acceptance "I was in a good humor all the week". He then added that he felt poets could not write well "except they think the subject deserves it" (*Correspondence*, 1.8).

It seems unlikely that even a hint of satire directed at the Athenians is present in the Ode.

HENRY MERRITT,  
21 Cyprus Road, Cambridge.

## Translating Kopelev

Sir, — In his review of Lev Kopelev's *The Education of a True Believer* (July 31), Michael Scammell condemns my translation with one sentence: "Unfortunately, the book is afflicted with a translation of such grotesque and egregious incompetence that only by a miracle does anything of the original survive at all". Mr Scammell continues: "Yet readers who persist with it will find their efforts rewarded, especially in the concluding chapters...". Already Mr Scammell undercuts his criticism, for if my translation were such a monstrosity, further reading could hardly reward readers' efforts. A translation that bad cannot, and should not, be read.

Permit me to say something about the book not mentioned in the review. Its author, Lev Kopelev, is a polyglot who provides generous samples of the languages in his cultural formation. Thus the book, *I sovoyei sebe knizhku* is written not only in Russian, but also in Ukrainian, Polish, German and Yiddish; one chapter is even devoted to Esperanto. There are, in addition, Biblical quotations, Soviet acronyms, poems and a variety of names in Cyrillic letters, all of which pose problems for the translator. It is to be expected that I would commit errors, as any human being must (I corrected the author's errors in Esperanto and Biblical quotations, for example), and likewise it is inevitable that some readers would not agree with my solutions. In a previous review, Hugh MacLean remarks that the translator "faced formidable problems: passages rife with colloquialisms, slang and even foreign languages — German, Polish and especially Ukrainian. How is a poor translator to reproduce the effect of Ukrainian passages in a Russian text? Mr Kern clears some of his hurdles brilliantly. But he seems to have worked in haste, and there are far too many slips and misunderstandings" (*New York Times Book Review*, August 31, 1980). Unlike Mr Scammell, Professor MacLean lists some of my mistakes, which are admittedly embarrassing, but he certainly does not brand my work as grotesque and egregiously incompetent.

Of course, it is impossible to prove one's professional competence in a letter to the editor, just as it is difficult to fight against the charge of insanity. To cite my credentials, my education and previous translations, would appear pretentious, while to point out the shortcomings of Mr Scammell's review would be petty and vindictive. Above all, to enter into a detailed defence of the translation would bore everybody. There is nothing to be done, neither for me nor for anyone else, save to say that in my view the critic will have the last word. Suffice it to say that should Mr Scammell care to prove any grotesque and egregious incompetence, I would appreciate the opportunity to respond. In the meantime, I must take solace in the approval of my work by other readers, who include the author.

Finally, to indicate that something of the original does survive in my translation, whether by accident or "miracle", I offer a short passage. (More complicated passages, employing foreign words, are too long for this letter.) Kopelev speaks of his yearning for an international union of brotherly love:

V yunosti ya veril: cho eta nadezhda perevolotilas' v prizyv: "Proletari vskhi stran, soedinyai'sya!" Pozdnee ubedilsya, cho ona zhivet i vo mnogikh drugikh voprosakh dlya menyego. Segodnya v puskhat'sya resti Dostoevskogo: "Byt' po natsyonalizmu ruskim — eto znachit byt' vshchelovekom".

My translation:

In youth I believed that this hope had taken flesh in the call: "Workers of the world, unite!" Later, I became convinced that La-

lived as well in many other embodiments. And for me today it sounds most clearly in the Pushkin speech of Dostoevsky: "To be really a Russian — this means to be a vshchelovek, a universal man".

GARY KERN,  
545 Highlander Drive, Riverside, California 92507.

## The United Irishmen

Sir, — Pádraig Ó Snodaigh's reference (Letters, August 28) to the number of United Irishmen in County Carlow in 1798 would appear to require some clarification. He cites figures to indicate that between 11,000 and 14,000 of the total population (men, women and children) of 44,000 were United Irishmen. Assuming males and females were about evenly distributed in the population before industrialization, famine and emigration intervened to upset demographic patterns, and that both young, children (under fifteen) and old folks would have represented about 40 per cent of all persons, one would arrive at something like 13,000 adult males able, though not necessarily willing, to give allegiance to the cause of the United Irishmen. That every Tom, Dick and Seamus ("between 11,000 and 14,000") should have done so seems wildly improbable.

JOSEPH O'BRIEN,  
28 Argyle Lane, East Hampton, NY.

## Sir Gawain and The Green Knight

Sir, — One does not lightly disagree with a scholar and critic who discourses so subtly as Professor T. A. Shippey, but I cannot accept his assertion, in his review of Humphrey Carpenter's edition of *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (August 28), that Sir Gawain, when the lady of the castle offers herself to him in *Sir Gwaloh and the Green Knight*, "never feels the temptation of lust at all", and that "if he had, neither he nor the poet, nor Tolkien as editor, would have mentioned it". To say that the poet does not mention it requires one to suppose that there is nothing libidinous about the "wight wallande joye" (ardently upwelling joy) which the poet tells us warned Gawain's heart (line 1762) at the sight of the lady in her beautiful and revealing attire. Besides, the poet goes on to say (lines 1768-9) that "Gret perile biwene hem stod; / Nir Maré of hir knygt mynne" (Great danger would have been present between them if the Virgin Mary had not taken thought for her knight), and these words are also hard to reconcile with a reading of the poem which makes Gawain immune to the temptation of lust. In an unforced reading they speak of temptation resisted, and it seems a dubious compulsion to "Tolkien" to suggest that he read them as referring to temptation never felt.

Such a reading, in my opinion, would also do injustice to the poet's mastery of plot and characterization and his grasp of his theme. Of course the real issue is never whether Gawain will commit carnal sin, but Gawain is made to think so, and the reader or hearer is made to think so, up to the very moment when the surprise is sprung. Gawain is up against an adversary who knows how to make him concentrate his attention on the wrong object: if a mere practitioner of legerdemain is skilled at this, how immeasurably more so must an authentic magician be! If we may apply terms of secular warfare to Gawain's psychomachia, the adversary's use of carnal temptation is a feint. To be effective, however, a feint must present itself to the attacked party as a serious threat, engrossing his attention and powers of resistance so that he is unable to counter the real threat from another quarter. So it is with Gawain. Intent on

his successful resistance to carnal temptation, he offers no resistance to the spiritual temptation, and indeed does not even recognize that his grave spiritual sin of cowardice and covetousness (lines 2369-86) is anything but a normal act of self-preservation (lines 1855-8). He shows us this unawareness by making what can only be an incomplete confession to his host's chapel priest (line 1876-84) — the poet's assurance that it was a complete confession must be taken as irony, for how can anyone "be pardoned and retain the offense"? — and by seeing no inconsistency between his repeated protestation that his trust is in God (lines 2138-9, 2158-9) and the fact that his trust is really in the green girdle (line 2040). It is only after the Green Knight shows him that the green girdle does not make him invulnerable, and tells him that his wound was the punishment for his breach of faith, that Gawain's eyes are opened. He then performs the act of contrition (lines 2369-86) that was obviously missing in his earlier confession (lines 1876-84), and receives what must be *valid* absolution from the Green Knight (lines 2389-94). By this reading the Green Knight is one of the most enigmatic figures in all literature, playing the part of the very devil himself in Gawain's psychomachia but acting as a priest and as the agent of God's purposes at the Green Chapel. But this mystery is the mystery of the poem itself and the poet does not tell us how to solve it. The whole structure, moreover, requires that the temptation to lust be seen as powerful.

CHARLES R. SLEETH,  
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## Gathorne Hardy

Sir, — It requires sharp eyes and local knowledge to catch Stephen Koss making a slip. But Gathorne Hardy never "tried unsuccessfully in 1847 to succeed his father as Liberal MP for Bradford" (September 4). John Hardy was a Tory and his son stood as a Conservative candidate in 1847. Admittedly, Hardy junior was much more liberal Conservative than his father, for his platform in 1847 was very similar to that of the Whigs and not all that different from that of the Radicals.

D. G. WRIGHT,  
9 Victoria Park, Shipley, West Yorkshire.

## 'Dying, in other words'

Sir, — Maggie Gee's charge that I did not read "vast numbers of pages" of her novel is false. I spent long hours separating overlapping monologues and following morbid rhapsodies, and this dispute over details of plot simply emphasizes the flaws I pointed out in my review. *Dying, in other words* is a sloppy, contradictory book with a characteristically too little of the wit of the masters (Nabokov, Vonnegut et al) to whom Maggie Gee has prayed in aid.

STODDARD MARTIN,  
21 Humboldt Road, London, W6.

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## commentary

## The selection collection

By Redmond O'Hanlon

Origin of Species  
Natural History Museum

In a massive permanent exhibition designed to celebrate its centenary, the British Museum (Natural History) has exercised a hundred years of experience in educational display with characteristic virtuosity. On the upper floor, opposite a case full of the simplest and most elegant of all natural selectors, the big cats, a short corridor admits the visitor into a light, high-ceilinged and richly carpeted gallery now transformed into a fairground: there are red metallic tents in which one may delectate whole populations of disadvantaged dark mice on television screens; wooden igloos where films, animated cartoons, philosophical chat shows and audio-visual displays run constantly; whole amusement arcades of ingenious question-and-answer machines; and walls of more conventional exhibits which wind amongst Alfred Waterhouse's original and splendid columns, themselves decorated with all manner of whimsical beasts.

Towering panelled collages of photographs, with representative real specimens from the greatest natural history collections in the world, visually state the initial problem. How did this overwhelming variety of animals and plants, from the unicellular organism to the ciliated worm on the ocean floor, to the hooded cobra or the Sumatran tiger come to be as it is? The extraordinary forms and personal devices of an Indian pangolin, like a monstrously purposeful fur cone; a hairy tree porcupine; a beaver offering his paddle for your speculation; a Bateleur Eagle, savagely regarding us over his shoulder; and an Impassive Eagle Owl outstaring every admiring eye—all these silently ask us to choose between natural theology and natural selection. And, just in case such an assemblage is altogether too exotic, an English kestrel hovers in the wilderness space above our heads, while two male shovellers fly curving into, but never quite reach, an English lake somewhere to our right.

Across this wealth of images two legends are inscribed. Above a black and white picture of a puffin, whose great beak is nevertheless plainly in its full breeding colours, we are told: "One view is... all living things have developed by a process of gradual change over a very long period of time. This is what we mean by evolution." To the right, above an anxious young man who is presumably off to a fundamentalist graduate school in Alabama, we are reminded: "Another view is... God created all living things perfect and unchanging. He created each one for a special purpose. This is the basis of the doctrine of Creation." But here, in the extreme left hand corner, there rises the quizzical and subversive head of the Shinkhorn *Phallus impudicus*, complete with a fly at its tip.

At the start of the exhibition proper, an aged Charles Darwin sits reading his study at Down House, a life-size photographic enlargement of one corner of which appropriately shows us the serried ranks of specially carpentered pigeon holes in which he placed his loose sheaves of notes under various headings. The rest of the exhibition brings the early contents of these seemingly innocuous wooden files to life and invites us to take the simplest possible walk through the great man's complex preoccupations.

We begin, like Darwin, by contemplating the dog lying at our fireside. Domestic, artificial selection of prized characteristics has certainly produced dramatic changes. Make a mere terrier with Alfoxed Frederick the Great (a preserved three-year-old bulldog presented to the museum in 1979 by Mr George Walsh and looking as if he, personally, would prefer to amputate your leg rather than suffer such an indignity), suitably interbreed his

offspring for several generations, and you would eventually produce a Staffordshire Bull Terrier. But differences may also be relatively subtle. A chunky proto-sausage dog of 1875 is still obviously akin to the low level frankfurter dachshund of 1975.

So how are species made in wilder nature? Once again we are asked to look first at the immediate and familiar, the garden pond and its water boatmen; the weaselly distinguished and stoutly different family of the *Mustelidae*; the onions, leeks, garlic and chives of our vegetable garden; and, just to prove that it is not a wholly academic matter, a few False Blushers and Fly Agrigies and the odd Death Cap. And then, by way of demonstrating that specific difference may be indicated by other means, music is provided for the entire exhibition by the specific songs of other equally almost identical looking (and equally tireless) cliff chaffs and willow warblers.

Unpleasant necessities like death and competition of one kind or another are cheerily illustrated with a cartoon of the Serengeti, trunk to tail with elephants. The consequent struggle is depicted with the help of a rabbit, very snug, in its cut-away burrow in the English chalk downland, temporarily unaware of the Common blue, the Small tortoise-shell, the Woodmouse, the Ruman snail and the outlier, award-winning, impossibly shiny British Museum (Natural History) woodlice above its head. A very perky male rabbit appears to be finding the battle for food, for space in suitable surroundings, and for young brown-eyed females entirely to his taste.

As Darwin wrote, "our ignorance of the laws of variation is profound." But it is less profound than it was in 1859, and Darwin would probably have given a good twenty years' supply of snuff (in one, respectable vice) for a chance to play a Mendelian game with the coat colour of shorthorn cattle; to study the modern implications of the inheritance of haemophilia amongst Queen Victoria's descendants; to add the genetic relationship between resistance to malaria and the possession of sickle cell anaemia to the huge amount of intricate accumulated evidence with which he held up his initial, simple idea.

He would have been delighted, too, with the more familiar, less mathematical demonstration of the varying fortunes of two different forms of the peppered moth (a spot-coloured mutant, first spotted in Manchester in 1848, is now dominant in industrial areas); with the astonishing series of Donald Butterflies illustrating Batesian mimicry; and with the dramatic raw research by the Museum's own scientists into the possible mechanisms which produced the two hundred distinct but similar species of cichlid fishes in Lake Victoria in East Africa, a process directly analogous to the effects of isolation on small populations of Darwin's Galapagos finches, whose evolving beaks are here celebrated with an accompanying array of nutcrackers, tweezers and pliers.

This is a brilliantly selected and organized exhibition, well supported with its own small book, *Origin of Species*, jointly published by the Museum and Cambridge University Press (£12 hardback, 0 521 23878 7; £3.95 paperback, 0 521 28276 4).

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* will be published later this year.

CHRISTOPHER HILL was Master of Balliol College, Oxford from 1965 to 1978. His books include *The World Turned Upside Down*, 1972, and *Social Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, 1980.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of French History at University College London. His books include *A Concise History of France*, 1970.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Civilizing Ape* will be published next year.

## Heartbeats in the void

By Brian Powell

Iroh: Life of Change  
Court Theatre, Holland Park

Percussion is part of Japanese life. Away from the pop music blaring from the loudspeakers of the urban pin-ball parlours, the sounds in the environment of the Japanese are mainly rhythmic and monotonous rather than melodic. The festival—and religious festivals are the only holidays in the pre-modern period—were attended by all the local population—uses only the drum or the bell. The *no* drama, which was popular entertainment at festivals, sets its music to three drums and a flute. In *knaki* the progress of the performance is marked by one set of clappers, while the dramatic climaxes are accentuated by another. There is virtually no dawn chorus in Japan, and the Westerner misses it. In the heat of the day there is the uninterrupted chatter of the cicadas instead, and the Japanese misses that here. It was in Japan that someone had the idea of mass-producing tapes of human heartbeats to soothe fretful babies.

Given this, it is not surprising that Japan has produced one of the world's greatest percussionists and exponents of percussion-based drama, Stomu Yamashita. The percussion of *Iroh*, Yamashita's recent production at the Court Theatre in Holland Park, could only have come from him. The sonorous temple bell was there, the cicadas, the human heart, the clappers, all fused into a rather less varied whole than in the past, but unique none the less. One missed the richness of instrumentation of *The Man from the East*, but Yamashita has not lost his capacity to create chord and percussion combinations that one feels cannot conceivably be improved upon.

The title Yamashita chose for his

new show is given the English subtitle, *Life of Change*. *Iroh* are the first three syllables of a poem which contains all the forty-seven elements of the Japanese phonetic syllabary. The poem itself, Buddhist in inspiration, stresses the transience of life and urges the reader to free himself from the physical world and its vicissitudes by overcoming its temptations and uniting with the absolute. *Iroh* portrays in dance form the struggle between the Buddhist forces of good and evil. A succession of male and female characters then enters one by one, and each acts out the crisis in his or her life. In front sits a priest, shaking the beads of his rosary, chanting his sutras and practicing exorcism by fire. Green laser beams flicker overhead, spotlights roam the stage and clouds of artificial smoke billow upwards. The priest is equal to the power of evil and steadfast in the face of its attacks. His novice, however, has not reached that plane of serenity and through the performance his dancing symbolizes his own personal struggle and the severity of Buddhist discipline. Perhaps Yamashita is showing us some of the trials which he himself experienced during his recent retreats.

Traditional elements are plentiful. The performing area, with its large central stage and passageways leading off to right and left, is modelled on the temple where *Iroh* was first performed, and the small pine trees planted at intervals in front of the passageways suggest the *no* theatre. No was the drama form most closely associated with Buddhism, especially Zen, and Yamashita has used many of its external features. He may have gone further than this. The programme and publicity mention *baguaku* and a famous fire festival, but much of *Iroh* is reminiscent of the *no* drama *Aoi no Ue*. This play, highly dramatic even in the refined style of private performance that developed in the early fifteenth century, has a climactic dance scene of exorcism.

Cormentary continues on page 1083.

## Among this week's contributors

LOUIS ALLEN is a lecturer in French at the University of Durham.

GEOFFREY BEST's most recent book in *Humanity in Warfare*, 1980. He is working on a book on war and society in revolutionary Europe.

NICHOLAS BEST's novel *Where Were You at Waterloo?* will be published shortly.

JEREMY CATTO is a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

RICHARD COMAS is editor of *The British Film Institute's Monthly Film Bulletin*.

PATRICIA CRAIG's critical study, *The Lady Investigates: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction*, a collaboration with Mary Cadogan, was published earlier this year.

NICHOLAS DAVIDSON is a lecturer in History at the University of Leicester.

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* will be published later this year.

CHRISTOPHER HILL was Master of Balliol College, Oxford from 1965 to 1978. His books include *The World Turned Upside Down*, 1972, and *Social Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, 1980.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of French History at University College London. His books include *A Concise History of France*, 1970.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Civilizing Ape* will be published next year.

JAMES KIRKUP teaches Comparative Literature at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. His recent books include *Dengonban Messages: One-line Poems*, 1981.

ERIC KOAN is an antiquarian book-seller in London.

HERMIONE LEE's *Elizabeth Bowen: An Estimation* will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the TLS.

MARY LUTYENS's books include *Milais and the Ruskins*, 1976, *Krishnamurti*, 1975, and a recent memoir of her father, Edwin Lutyens.

HALEN McNEIL is a lecturer in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

RICHARD MAYNE's books include *The Recovery of Europe*, 1970, and a translation of Jean Monnet's *Memoirs*, 1978.

VENETIA NEWALL's books include *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Magic*, 1974. She is the editor of *International Folklore Review*.

S. N. PLACID's latest translation is of *Tancred Doris's Merliu*.

BRIAN POWELL is a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He is writing a book on the modern Japanese playwright, Mayama Seika.

BRYAN RANFT was Professor of History at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, from 1966 to 1977.

DAVID RIDGWAY is joint editor of *Italy Before the Romans*, 1979.

MICHAEL ROAF is Assistant Director of the British Archaeological Expedition to Iran and a Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford.

PAT ROGERS's books include *The Augustan Vision*, 1974, and *Henry Fielding*, 1979.

JOHN ROISTER is lecturer in Modern History at Durham University and editor of the new journal *Parliament, Estates and Representation*.

K. G. ROBBINS's books include *The Abolition of War*, 1974.

VERNON SCANNELL's *New and Collected Poems 1950-1980* was published last year.

PETER STAD is a lecturer in History at University College of Swansea.

STUART SUTHERLAND is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex.

A. J. P. TAYLOR's recent books include *Revolutions and Revolutionsaries and Historians, Socialism and Politicians*, both 1980.

JULIAN TREUHER is Keeper of Fine Art at Manchester City Art Gallery.

J. B. TRAFF edited *The Apology of Sir Thomas More*, 1979.

GILLIAN TINGALL's most recent novel is *The Intruder*, 1979.

JEREMY WALDRON is a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

J. F. WATKINS is Professor of Medical Microbiology at the Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the *Oxford Shakespeare*.

STANLEY WEINTRAUB's most recent book is *The London Yankel*, 1979.

## The Historical Novel

Sir. — It was a pleasant surprise to see half a page of the TLS (August 28) devoted to that neglected (if marketable) commodity, the historical novel, but a disappointment to find Robert Hewison's approach so negative. After conceding that in a cold climate for the modern novel there is still profit in historical ones, he devotes most of his review to such destructive criticism of the genre in general and his nine subjects in particular that one ends by wondering why the vulgar things sell at all.

Mr Hewison has some very odd views about the historical novel. According to him, they are always historically inaccurate, and should therefore properly be called history-novels. I only know two of the authors he reviews, but I would defy him to find a major inaccuracy in Jean Stubbs or C. Northcote Parkinson. Too much, rather than too little history is often the failing of the modern historical novel, which, I suppose, is what Mr Hewison means when he says that "history removes the need for invention, so the narrator can concentrate on inventions".

But why does history remove the need for invention? Having, interestingly, conceded that it is possible to place any modern fictional genre in a historical setting, Mr Hewison goes on to the amazing conclusion that setting somehow entails an entire absence of character, plot and style. I would have said that the strength (and success) of the historical novel lay exactly in the fact that whereas plot is a dirty word in the context of the modern novel, it is an allowable virtue in historical ones. The stress between historical time and characters' time, between background and plot, is one of the fruitful problems of these books. I suppose *War and Peace* is the classic example of this. And would Mr Hewison really argue that there is no character in *War and Peace*? Or in *Henry Esmond*? Or in *The Birds Fall Down*? Or in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*?

Coming back, later, to plot, Mr Hewison admits that a hero and heroine are necessary evils of the historical novel, and often achieve a happy (or fairy-story) ending. Has he not, perhaps, put his finger here on the answer to a question posed earlier in his article? What satisfactions, he asked, are there in writing or reading the things? Well, one of the satisfactions is the achievement of a happy ending. This has become almost impossible in a modern novel, except in the saccharine (if significantly successful) terms of Mills and Boon. But there are, in fact, happy moments in people's lives. By focusing on one of these, a happy ending becomes possible. By setting it in the past, it becomes believable. I expect Figaro's Couot got into Susanna's bed pretty soon after the marriage, but that is neither here nor there in the opera. Jane Austen summed up the happy-ending problem in *Persuasion* when she described the happiness of Anne and Captain Wentworth: "His profession was all that could ever make her friends wish [her] tenderness less; the dread of a future war, all that could dim her sunshine." But, for the moment, they were happy.

Mumankind cannot bear very much reality. Books on the royal wedding are still selling like ice cream in August. If the historical novel can make happy endings respectable, good for it. If the reader picks up a little history *en passant*, so much the better. One of Mr Hewison's criticisms is that "the source-bound author is unlikely to challenge conventional historical judgments". It is hardly his job, surely? And oddly enough, when one of the authors under review does take a mildly idiosyncratic line, Mr Hewison at once accuses him of using twentieth-century devices, as, for instance, the outsider as hero, or the liberated woman as heroine. Twentieth-

century? They are surely as old as the novel.

Concern for style, according to him, is "rigidly excluded by the demands of naturalism". Why? One of the difficult pleasures of writing historical novels is trying to achieve a language, both in narrative and in dialogue, that will suggest the historical period without alienating, or, worse still, boring the reader. Mary Renault and George Heyer both succeed superbly at this in their very different ways.

Mr Hewison comes at last to the only one of the novels that he seems to have managed to enjoy at all. It is *Long Day at Shiloh*, which, he says, has no hero and no plot, but a great deal of style: "The invented dialogue with its onomatopoeic spelling brings the material alive". It sounds remarkably like a modern novel. Perhaps Mr Hewison would be happier, and more constructive, reviewing those.

JANE AIKEN HODGE,  
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## Poetry and Esperanto

Sir. — George Szirtz's suggestion of an analogy for the joint effort of Octavio Paz and Charles Tomlinson (September 4) is perceptive — more as to the potentialities of Esperanto than its achievements, which can hardly compare with those of either poet. The quoted lines indeed translate readily:

Damo larila de memor' el si,  
temp-interpase blanka - pli pensile  
de vive, pli dilila de pensa,  
domo dadrud la propa son'...

But I agree that Montale is better.

KRIS LONG,  
85 Point Royal, Bracknell, Berks.

Sir. — As a poet whose language is Esperanto I take serious exception to George Szirtz's sentence (September 4): "But in tackling archetypal themes they have committed themselves to a kind of poetic Esperanto". This is plainly intended to be derogatory, as witness the word "archetypal" in the following sentence. "A kind of poetic Esperanto", indeed! — he means, I suppose, a kind of unpoetic English. It is obvious your reviewer has never read any Esperanto poetry, which makes his comment intellectually and morally dishonest, and until he has read some of our best poets he should desist from making such judgments.

W. AULD,  
20 Harvelstoua Road, Dollar, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, FK14 7HO.

## The 'Athenian Society'

Sir. — In his review of A. B. England's *Swift and Order in the Poetry of a Night* (September 4) Claude Rawson feels that Swift's "Ode to the Athenian Society" contains lines "which can be suspected of some element of mockery of the Athenian Society itself, though its main drift is eulogistic". This may reflect Swift's own embarrassment for his wholehearted approval of the Society to the Ode, when he learned that the men he had praised so highly were hacks. Swift was certainly fervent in his admiration of the Society, even if his admiration was aborted: not only did he sign and date his poem (a very rare occurrence), but he wrote to his cousin Thomas Swift that as a result of the poem's acceptance "I was in a good humor all the week". He then added that he felt poets could not write well "except they think the subject deserves it" (Correspondence, 1.8).

It seems unlikely that even a hint of satire directed at the Athenians is present in the Ode.

HENRY MERRITT,  
21 Cyprus Road, Cambridge.

## Translating Kopelev

Sir. — In his review of Lev Kopelev's *The Education of a True Believer* (July 31), Michael Scammell condemns my translation with one sentence: "Unfortunately, the book is afflicted with a translation of such grotesque and egregious incompetence that only by a miracle does anything of the original survive at all". Mr Scammell continues: "Yet readers who persist with it will find their efforts rewarded, especially in the concluding chapters..."

Permit me to say something about the book not mentioned in the review. Its author, Lev Kopelev, is a polyglot who provides generous samples of the languages in his cultural formation. Thus the book, *I sovetskiye kumiri*, is written not only in Russian, but also in Ukrainian, Polish, German and Yiddish; one chapter is even devoted to Esperanto. Quotations, Soviet acronyms, poems and a variety of names in Cyrillic letters, all of which pose problems for the translator. It is to be expected that I would commit errors, as any human being must (I corrected the author's errors in Esperanto and Russian quotations, for example), and likewise it is inevitable that some readers would not agree with my solutions. In a previous review, Hugh McLean remarks that the translator "faced formidable problems: passages rife with colloquialisms, slang and even foreign languages — German, Polish and especially Ukrainian. How is a poor translator to reproduce the effect of Ukrainian passages in a Russian text? Mr Kern clears some of his hurdles brilliantly. But there are far too many slips and misreadings" (*New York Times Book Review*, August 31, 1980). Unlike Mr Scammell, Professor McLean lists some of my mistakes, which are admittedly embarrassing, but he certainly does not brand my work as grotesque and egregiously incompetent.

Of course, it is impossible to prove one's professional competence in a letter to the editor, just as it is difficult to fight against the charge of insanity. To cite my credentials, my education and previous translations, would appear pretentious, while to point out the shortcomings of Mr Scammell's review would be petty and vindictive. Above all, to enter into a detailed defence of the translation would bore everybody. There is nothing to be done, neither for me nor for anyone else, save to write a critic, for any event the critic will have the last word. Suffice it to say that should Mr Scammell care to prove my grotesque, and egregiously incompetent, I would appreciate the opportunity to respond. In the meantime, I must take solace in the approval of my work by other readers, who include the author.

Finally, to indicate that something of the original does survive in my translation, whether by accident or "miracle", I offer a short passage. (More complicated passages, employing foreign words, are too long for this letter). Kopelev speaks of his yearning for an international union of brotherly love:

V yuznati ya veril' cho eta nadezhda perevoplotitsya v prizyv: "Proletari! vechi stran, soedinyai-tes!" Pozdnee ubedivshya, eto ona zhivet i vo mnogikh drugikh voprosakh. I vsego ravneniya dlya nashy negodnyye v puskikinskoi rechi Dostoevskogo. "Byt' po nastoyashchemu russkim — eto znachit byt' vsechelovekom".

My translation:  
In youth I believed that this hope had taken flesh in the call: "Workers of the world, unite!" Later I became convinced that it

lived as well in many other embodiments. And for me today it sounds most clearly in the Russian speech of Dostoevsky: "To be really a Russian — this means to be a *vsechelovek*, a universal man".

GARY KERN,  
545 Highlander Drive, Riverside, California 92507.

## The United Irishmen

Sir. — Pádraig Ó Snodaigh's reference (Letters August 28) to the number of United Irishmen in County Carlow in 1798 would appear to require some clarification. He cites figures to indicate that between 17,000 and 14,000 of the total population (men, women and children) of 44,000 were United Irishmen. Assuming males and females were about evenly distributed in the population before industrialization, famine and emigration intervened to upset demographic patterns, and that both young children (under fifteen) and old folks would have represented about 40 per cent of all persons, one would arrive at something like 13,000 adult males able, though not necessarily willing, to give allegiance to the cause of the United Irishmen. That every Tom, Dick and Seamus ("between 11,000 and 14,000") should have done so seems wildly improbable.

JOSEPH O'BRIEN,  
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## Sir Gawain and The Green Knight

Sir. — One does not lightly disagree with a scholar and critic who discourses as subtly as Professor T. A. Shippey, but I cannot accept his assertion, in his review of Humphrey Carpenter's edition of *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (August 28), that Sir Gawain, when the lady of the castle offers herself to him in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, "never feels the temptation of lust at all" and that "if he had, neither he nor the poet, nor Tolkien as editor, would have mentioned it".

To say that the poet does not mention it requires one to suppose that there is nothing libidinous about the "wigt wallande joye" (ardently upwelling joy) which the poet tells us warmed Gawain's heart (line 1762) at the sight of the lady in her beautiful and revealing attire. Besides, the poet goes on to say (lines 1768-9) that "Oret perle biwene hem stod / Nei Mar of he krygt myn". Great danger would have been present between them if the Virgin Mary had not taken thought for her knight, and these words are also hard to reconcile with a reading of the poem which makes Gawain immune to the temptation of lust. In an unforced reading they speak of temptation, resisted, and it seems a dubious compliment to Tolkien to suggest that he read them as referring to temptation never felt.

Such a reading, in my opinion, would also do injustice to the poet's mastery of plot and characterization and his grasp of his theme. Of course the real issue is never whether Gawain will commit carnal sin, but Gawain is made to think so, and the reader or hearer is made to think so, up to the very moment when the surprise is sprung. Gawain is up against an adversary who knows how to make him concentrate his attention on the wrong object; if a mere practitioner of legerdemain is skilled at this, how immeasurably more so must an authentic magician be! If we may apply terms of secular warfare to Gawain's psychomachia, the adversary's use of carnal temptation is a feint. To be effective, however, a feint must present itself to the attacked party as a serious threat, engrossing his attention and powers of resistance so that he is unable to counter the real threat from another quarter. So it is with Gawain. Intent on

his successful resistance to carnal temptation, he offers no resistance to the spiritual temptation, and indeed does not even recognize that his grave spiritual sin of cowardice and covetousness (lines 2369-86) is anything but a normal act of self-preservation (lines 1855-8). He shows us this unweariness by making what can only be an incomplete confession to his host's chapel priest (line 1876-84) — the poet's assurance that it was a complete confession must be taken as irony, for how can anyone "be pardoned and retain the offence"? — and by seeing no inconsistency between his repeated protestation that his trust is in God (lines 2138-9, 2158-9) and the fact that his trust is really in the green girdle (line 2040). It is only after the Green Knight shows him that the green girdle does not make him invulnerable, and tell him that his wound was the punishment for his breach of faith, that Gawain's eyes are opened. He then performs the act of *contrition* (lines 2869-86) that was obviously missing in his earlier confession (lines 1876-84), and receives what must be *valid* absolution from the Green Knight (lines 2389-94). By this reading the Green Knight is one of the most enigmatic figures in all literature, playing the part of the very devil himself in Gawain's psychomachia but acting as a priest and as the agent of God's purposes at the Green Chapel, but this mystery is the mystery of the poem itself and the poet does not tell us how to solve it. The whole structure, moreover, requires that the temptation to lust be seen as powerful.

CHARLES R. SLEETH,  
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## Gathorne Hardy

Sir. — It requires sharp eyes and local knowledge to catch Stephen Koss making a slip. But Gathorne Hardy never "tried unsuccessfully in 1847 to succeed his father as Liberal MP for Bradford" (September 4). John Hardy was a Tory and his son stood as a Conservative candidate in 1847. Admittedly Hardy junior was a much more liberal Conservative than his father, for his platform in 1847 was very similar to that of the Whigs and not all that different from that of the Radicals.

D. G. WRIGHT,  
9 Victorin Park, Shipley, West Yorkshire.

## 'Dying, in other words'

Sir. — Maggie Gee's charge that I did not read "vast numbers of pages" of her novel is false. I spent long hours separating overlapping monologues and following morbid rhapsodies, and this dispute over details of plot simply emphasizes the flaws I pointed out in my review. Dying in other words is a sloppy, recondite book with too many characters and too little of the wit of the masters (Nabokov, Vonnegut et al) to whom Maggie Gee has prayed in aid.

STODDARD MARTIN,  
21 Humboldt Road, London, W6.

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## Documents of deception

By Thomas Sutcliffe

GEORGE HOUSEHOLD:  
Summon the Bright Water  
191pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95.  
0 7181 2052 3  
Capricorn and Cancer  
255pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95.  
0 7181 2003 5

This confession - shall I call it? - is written to keep myself from brooding, to get down what happened in the order in which it happened. I am not content with myself. With this pen and this book I hope to find some clarity. I create a second self, a man of the past by whom the man of the present may be measured. Like the narrators of many of Geoffrey Household's subsequent novels, the protagonist and putative author of *Rogue Male* is an avowedly amateur writer, forced into recording and revealing by circumstance rather than through vanity. He regards writing as something which requires the courtesy of an explanation; it is, after all, not an activity a sane man would necessarily take up. His explanation provides two perhaps conflicting motives for telling a story - the relatively simple desire to convey the facts, and a less pragmatic anxiety to immobilize the flickering anxiety. Such a distinction has often served to sort bestselling sheep from literary goats.

*Rogue Male*, his first real success and probably still the book which makes Household a name, is in print since 1939 - a good run for what might at first have looked for what ordinary work. The list of Household's work in the frontispiece of *Capricorn and Cancer*, a fairly routine adventure published in 1955, classifies books like *Rogue Male* and *Summon the Bright Water* as "Romances" while his first novel *Third Hour and Arabesque* are set above them, distinguished as "novels". That embarrassed segregation, tacitly confessing that thrillers are at best a diversion, is now of course quite old-fashioned and since 1939 Household, who recently celebrated his eightieth birthday, has worked as diligently as any writer to confuse the categories.

*Rogue Male* takes the form of the fiction which presents itself as an authentic document, a narrative for the later novels which has explored increasing ingenuity. We are asked to believe, in a significantly large number of his books, that the original manuscripts were not neat sheaves of double-spaced A4 but heavily purchased notebooks dispatched mud-stained to solicitors in case of arrest; or else that they were journals discovered months after the author's death, mildewed but readable, in a black insect-proof metal box delivered to the publishers of his fascinating monograph *Fodder Plants of the New World*.

The convention is as old as the novel, if not more senior, and has for the thriller writer. Events are related in a directly partisan manner, the ignorance of the central characters is preserved. Psychological ripping yarn, a notorious drag on the prose, is subsumed into action: discursive, slangy and self-consciously unartistic. But Household doesn't just use the device because it provides a meretricious authenticity. He has shown it to be a narrative method of some sophistication and adaptability and over his lengthy career has produced several elegant and useful variations on the basic theme.

In *Rogue Male* the story is divided into three consecutive sections, a simple elaboration which lifts the dead hand of hindsight but also allows the narrator to come clean about a self-deception in the early passages. In *Dance of the Dwarfs*, a novel about the sources and effects of fear and superstition, he brings off the sleight of hand of revealing, in a

publisher's preface to the discovered manuscript, what finally happens to the principal characters while maintaining suspense until the final, unfinished sentence. In *Ohara*, a novel set in the Basque country with a British philologist as the hero, we are presented with a portfolio of different accounts of the same events though, as an introduction warns, "none might be forgiven for failing, here and there, immediately to recognise that indeed they are the same".

Household also has a nice line in self-disparagement, an enjoyable flourish to acknowledge the reader that we all know what is going on really. In *Rogue Male* the central character, revealing in a letter the final twist to the story (a Household story generally ends on the last page, which is not as easy as it sounds), writes "I want these papers published. If necessary have them brushed up by some competent hack and marketed under his name." And in *Fellow Passenger* a scientific and correct Epilogue by Sir Alexander Romilly, C.H., D.Sc., D.Litt., FR.S., describes the preceding pages as "a work of which the execrable taste, enlivened though it be by ribaldry, can arouse and indeed deserves nothing but disgust". The strength of the novels is not in the details of plot, which even in *Rogue Male* occasionally stretches a little thin, but in the skill with which this simple device is manipulated. Things happen in the writing as well as in the world the writing describes.

Unfortunately knowing how narrative works isn't a firm guarantee that it always will, and *Summon the Bright Water*, the latest Household novel, is a good example of some of the drawbacks of his favourite method. The narrator in this case is Piers Colet, an economic historian on a walking tour along the banks of the Severn, who stays overnight at a renaissance-style commune and then sources of its finances. He is nearly murdered by the sinister leader of the community, Simon Martin, falls in love with Martin's niece Elsa, and takes an active and insouciant part in two manslaughters. He writes ostensibly his own actions and serve as the basis of my defence if I am run in on a charge of murder, but there is no sense of a terse necessity driving his narrative and the enthusiasm with which Colet throws himself into amateur detection and field-craft suggest a disquieting venture scout rather than the victim of genuinely dangerous men. We suffer here from the enforced intimacy of the confessional journal, which works elsewhere to enlist our sympathies. Colet is opinionated, complacent and has

the inviolable knowledgeability of the pub bore. He is not even really surprised by the attempt to murder him: Murder for the sake of religion has never been a problem for the fanatic. Look at Hindu and Mithraic, medieval in India or the bloodthirsty sects of the Middle East, or nearer to our own cultural aberrations that follow Jones who fascinated his entire colony in Guyana into committing suicide.

The narrative is constantly interrupted by such aperçus, generally couched in the sort of bluff military euphemism which once made an old gentleman, in my hearing, refer to Adolf Hitler as "Mr H". Colet is also relentlessly keen to pass on information. When Elsa suggests that the money for the commune might be coming from her uncle's alchemical experiments we are told that "She was in good company. Isaac Newton had believed it possible and in later life suffered from fits of insanity, probably due to the ingestion of lead and mercury which he lavished on his experiments."

*Summon the Bright Water* is in some ways a re-working of *Rogue Male*, continuing the theme of the hunted male thrown back on instinct and cunning for survival and employing, but this time three-part narrative structure. But it has none of the intelligent and crafted purpose of the earlier book. A feverish invention has replaced the simplicities, so that the plot is an increasingly unlikely confection of hidden treasure and underworld searches, pagan worship and even hints at a connection with Atlantis. In the end the book is rather like being stuck in a provincial hotel with an elderly guest telling tall tales and quoting interesting bits from old *Reader's Digests*.

Household's collection of short stories *Capricorn and Cancer* provides a perfect alternative to the novel. Household started by writing stories and he does it in the old style: they are not epiphanies but tales with a twist and the selection here again testifies to his invention and talent in narrative, ranging from a Waugh-like description of the burial of a dictator's heart to a grim account of an unofficial war-time assassination. Two of the most memorable, "The Idealist" and "First Blood", describe acts of insane courage prompted by motives no more passionate than politeness and a sense of social propriety. They are perceptive, funny and entirely convincing, and they are told not in the voice of the main character or through found documents but by a politely omniscient author. It is a useful reminder that Geoffrey Household is a writer and more effective storyteller than the narrator of *Summon the Bright Water*.

## In the icy North

By Michael Trend

JOHN BUCHAN:  
Sick Heart River  
229pp. Loamhead, Midlothian: MacDonald. £6.95.  
0 904265 43 9

John Buchan's last novel, *Sick Heart River*, set in the freezing far north of Canada, was written when the author was Governor-General of that country and a dying man. Its reissue is a welcome event but Trevor Royle's four-page introduction is in any depth on Buchan's time in Canada and on his vaudeville story, claims - but it is one that those familiar with Buchan's work will find particularly moving.

*Sick Heart River* is the story of Sir Edward Leithen's - and by strong implication the author's - "last and greatest adventure", as Buchan's wife put it. Leithen, knowing that he is terminally ill, prepares to meet his end "to the standing, to go out in his boots". He undertakes to go to Canada to seek out and restore to sanity Francis Galliard, a man of genius in the business world; "there aren't five men in the United States whose reputations are higher" (none of Buchan's heroes - or villains - are ever anything less than one of the "top five men").

The main thread of the novel concerns Leithen's travels in the North with the dependable Johnny Frizell as his guide. They are chasing Galliard (Johnny's brother), who is impelled by a lunatic obsession to reach the nearly inaccessible Sick Heart River. Leithen's task of returning Galliard to his senses brings him up against the dangerous condition of the North, a tribe of Hare Indians which is committing collective suicide through anaemia and depression.

The characters in this forceful and dramatically told tale are all sick of life in one way or another. Of biblical dimensions, the symbolism of reaching and crossing rivers of life and death, the various references to *Pilgrim's Progress*, are constant themes as the characters come face to face with the power of their ancestry, their religion and their attitudes to life and death. The uncompromising harshness of the mountains and the horrendous cold and fear of starvation are opposed by Lew Grizell ("a creature so instinct with life") and by the "deep purpose of mercy" that Leithen comes to discover as part of the dispensation

of his rather Old Testament God. "Now there suddenly broke in on him like a sunrise a sense of God's mercy - deeper than the foreordination of things".

That this is Buchan speaking directly to his readers there can be no doubt. Susan Buchan wrote "I think that Sir Edward Leithen is perhaps the most like John Buchan of any of the characters. I recognize in sentences which he gives to Sir Edward to say, and in actions which he makes him perform, some touches of autobiography" (Buchan was at the same time working on his volume of memoirs, *Memory Hold-The-Door*). *Sick Heart River* was in part based on the experiences of Buchan's son Johnnie who had spent a year in the Arctic, but it was not his best novel - as Mr Royle claims - but it is one that those familiar with Buchan's work will find particularly moving.

It was Buchan's last chance to see the wilds of nature that he had loved so much. There are many moments in his wife's account of the journey that remind one of the last novel: "My husband's fancy had been caught by a certain Rivière de l'Enfer, which is supposed to be somewhere far away in the hinterland of Quebec, and about which he is always trying to get news"; "talk all ways drifted to the valley of the South Nahanni River, which is one of the mystery spots of the North". It is as if Buchan were saying farewell by searching out the ultimate hiding spot.

Buchan also pays his final respects to his fictional family, a group of many heroes that a whole generation of readers grew up with. Leithen, and a mixed bag of contemporary Soviet military theorists, of whom the least unfamiliar is Marshal Sokolovskii and Admiral Gorshkov, is to study, not persons or persons, but problems; not to survey all varieties and nuances of Marxism but to present as systematically as possible what major Marxists (meaning, besides those who have argued and lectured the most persuasively, those who have simply been on the winning side) have proclaimed to be correct answers to the main questions: how much of a science of war (Vize, Clausewitz) can a Marxist-Leninist share with a bourgeois? how much war (nuclear, included) is to be gone through before universal socialism makes war obsolete, and how should Marxist-Leninists view it and prepare for it? and how, in particular, are the revolutionary situations all over Africa, Asia and Central/South America best to be brought to victorious fruition?

So much of the appeal of socialism and communism lying in their visions and promise of peace, and the dove - especially since Picasso gave them the most famous dove since Noah's - have become peculiarly their bird, not the eagle. It can require a certain mental fortitude to recall that that promise is provisional, and that dove still a long way from home. "Disarmament is the ideal of socialism", wrote Lenin in 1916. "There will be no wars in socialist society; consequently, disarmament will be achieved. But..." (p. 186). Twenty years later, Mao was writing: "The aim of war is to eliminate war. War, this monster of mutual slaughter among men, will be finally eliminated by the progress of human society, and in the not too distant future too. But..." (p. 178). In an extract from the Moscow 1972 collective work *Marxism-Leninism on War and Army*: "Communism brings eternal peace to mankind. The most important content of communist ideology is internationalism, humanitarianism, love of peace, the mutual assistance of peoples in all spheres of social life..." (p. 291). Always that "But" - forbidding, realistic or exhilarating, according to how one chooses to regard it. As William Odom, David Holroyd and others have reminded us, socialism, far from being ill-suited for war, is a socio-political system which actually can go to war very well.

BERNARD SEMMEL (Editor):  
Marxism and the Science of War  
302pp. Oxford University Press.  
£15.95 (paperback). £6.95.  
0 19 876112 0

Borrowing for a moment from the basic vocabulary and manners of some of the writers of the extracts which fill most of this book, we would like - before proceeding to judge whether Bernard Semmel's assessment of them is correct - to begin by establishing what precisely and concretely the book is about. "Marxism" for one set of reasons, and "the science of war" for another, are not perspicuous terms, and the author has been so strong-minded and self-denying as to do without a subtitle. If there were one, how might it read? Something like: *The Theory and Practice of War* as expounded by main-line Marxist-Leninists from the Founding Fathers to the Present. Professor Semmel has settled starkly on "the Science of War", reasonably enough, in order to intimate that the matter in question is proper place in the grand edifice of superior, indeed scientific understanding, which Marxists believe to be theirs.

His introduction accordingly attempts the double analysis, "both of how Marxist ideology helped to shape a Marxist science of war, and of how the science of war has altered the face of Marxism". The extracts, presented in five thematic groups, come from a relatively concentrated selection of authors: from Marx and Engels, eighteen together; Luxemburg and Bukharin, one each; Lenin eight and Trotsky eleven; Mao Tse-tung seven, and Lin Biao two; Ernest Mandel and Régis Debray, one each; and a mixed bag of contemporary Soviet military theorists, of whom the least unfamiliar is Marshal Sokolovskii and Admiral Gorshkov, thirteen. The objects it will be seen, but problems; not to survey all varieties and nuances of Marxism but to present as systematically as possible what major Marxists (meaning, besides those who have argued and lectured the most persuasively, those who have simply been on the winning side) have proclaimed to be correct answers to the main questions: how much of a science of war (Vize, Clausewitz) can a Marxist-Leninist share with a bourgeois? how much war (nuclear, included) is to be gone through before universal socialism makes war obsolete, and how should Marxist-Leninists view it and prepare for it? and how, in particular, are the revolutionary situations all over Africa, Asia and Central/South America best to be brought to victorious fruition?

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## Out of the barrel of a gun

By Geoffrey Best

and British readers should need no reminding that it was precisely when their own country's socio-political organization was most nearly socialist, from 1942 to 1945, that its war-effort achieved its most solid purposefulness. The Soviet armed forces had no direct experience of war between 1945 and 1979 (and then it was only evidence of any popular Russian desire to reduce them or to escape Russia's multifarious military service; rather do Soviet citizens seem to accept their leaders' argument, that such a high degree of military readiness, undeniably costly though it be, has actually preserved their peace as nothing less awesome would have done. Nor can this be attributed wholly to Russia's strong military tradition and long familiarity with authoritarian government. Vietnam might be found to offer parallels, but to press China and Cuba into the same mould is to stretch credulity beyond breaking point. Military science and efficiency can be seen as just as necessary to protect socialism, once established, as to achieve it in the first place.

But the question of protecting established socialism (or communism, or whatever it became in the Soviet Union) is of course exclusively a post-1917 one, and indeed a much more recent one still for any country but Russia. Most of the Marxists cited here have in view the achievement of socialism in their own country and, on grounds both altruistic and prudential, in everyone else's. That this must mean war in some form or other - "violence", anyway - they almost all take for granted, altering the analysis from time to time only to cope with the changing shape of their arch-enemy (as they perceive him), the bourgeois nationalist and imperialist relations has little of liveliness, variety and (a non-Marxist might well complain) sensitivity or even realism in it, their prescriptions for the most appropriate and promising mode of military effort vary a great deal, both through the years and, at any one time, among themselves. The outlining of this variation and development is the main theme of Semmel's forty-page Introduction, and it is undoubtedly the aspect of the book which will most interest the contemporary reader, if only because he can now see the sharp end of it or even feel it already sticking into him.

The founding fathers, as is by now well known, took a great interest in the wars of their age and wrote with much intelligence about them. No better contemporary commentators were published than those of Marx and Engels (it is sometimes difficult to know who was more responsible, for example, "the Indian mutiny", the American Civil War, and Prussia's short sharp wars against Austria and France. Engels, moreover, became one of the century's best-informed writers on military history and the science of war in general, and wrote enough in those fields to have made a name in them alone, if there had been no others. He and Marx, once they had got past their personal revolutionary involvements in 1848, surveyed this side of the life of their age with scientific detachment. Accepting war as a natural fact of life, and admiring Clausewitz for having written more paterfamilially about war than anyone else, they analysed and classified wars as major devices of social development which expressed with peculiar directness the antagonisms bound to exist between the exploited and exploiters (whether within one society or as between one society and another) and between commercial and imperial rivals.

In the course of such analysis and classification they could not help lighting upon two problems, which have remained ever since: first, under what conditions and with what technology, could the "people" (whether Chinese or Moroccan, French or Polish) take on the armed apparatus of State power? and second, how can the results of wars between advanced countries, like Germany and France,

be made sure to conform to the requirements of dialectical materialism? Engels, towards the end of his life, became increasingly concerned to find answers to these questions, but came up with nothing more encouraging than recommendations to "the people" to take advantage of the free instruction in the use of weapons their rulers were giving them by means of conscription, and to wait for the culminating day when increasing polarization of classes would enable them to use their experience to make class warfare military. The apparent power of the State and the need to wait for the wheels of history to turn joined a certain humane distaste for avoidable bloodshed to prevent Engels from seeing any faster way forward.

Lenin it was who, in the next generation, grasped the nettle and laid about him with them. It was no good waiting for history, as the prime pundits and elder statesmen of Marxism turned impatiently, revealing the eyes of Hilferding, Luxemburg, Bukharin and others of the new generation an appetite for aggressive warfare more profound and systematic than even the founding fathers had supposed, so, said Lenin, must the people more urgently seek ways of being aggressive themselves and, with luck, hustling the pace of history on a bit. He appealed, in effect, from the older, more cautious Marx and Engels to their younger selves, who had thought hopefully enough of barricades and pickets in 1848 and had believed, in the last bright confident morning, that perhaps the course of history could be bent to their revolutionary will.

Much of the direct violent action taken by the people in the 1930s revolution impressed Lenin and Engels and seems to have set him thinking on new lines. Semmel's extracts from his 1906 writings are of crucial significance. Sensing a widening range of revolutionary opportunities and evidently thirsting to take advantage of them, Lenin - wedded as he was to the conviction that Marxism provided a uniquely "scientific" understanding of the human world - had to prove that he had acquired a more scientific understanding of the current situation than anyone else. "Let us begin from the beginning," he pleaded. "Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle... Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes [my italics], Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied forms of defence and attack..." "The Party had been right formerly to condemn 'old Russian terrorism' and to keep well away from mere 'hooliganism', Blanquism, anarchism etc, but times were changing, the working-class's insistence on violent forms of action was growing, it was 'absolutely natural and inevitable' that the due culmination should be 'the higher and more complex form of a prolonged civil war embracing the whole country'..." "guerrilla warfare" was in these circumstances a perfectly correct tactic. They had been wary of guerrilla warfare in the past, as being "abnormal and demoralizing", and anarchic, but so long as the Party kept control of it, put it into its proper place in relation to other methods of struggle and "enrolled [it] by the enlightenment and organizing influence of socialism", nothing but good could result.

Upon this hinge, the book turns. The nuclear question apart, guerrilla warfare becomes its main theme even as the key in which it is set changes from original Marxism to Marxist-Leninism. The assumption remains unchanged, that capitalism and imperialism put increasingly on the defensive, must sooner or later come crumbling down and richly deserve to do so, but the principal interest becomes that of the people's seeking release from them at the first, not the

last, opportunity. To cut a long story short and to skirt the most tedious (though not, for the patient, the least instructive) extracts - those from Trotsky as he argued with Tukhachevsky and other deluded comrades about the correct form of organization for the Red Army and the correct strategy and tactics for it - it concerns the adaptation of Marx's and Lenin's revolutionary principles, developed as they were in the circumstances of advanced industrial societies, to suit the very different circumstances of peasant, rural societies.

Lenin indeed had hunted history on to most remarkable effect, but the means had been action primarily in the cities, led by his city-based revolutionary vanguard. He had revolutionized a society which was by no means the most advanced industrial society available, but he had never supposed that leadership could come from anywhere other than a party formed and forged in an industrial proletariat. Moscow's hand - heavier when it became Stalin's - had laid heavy on the communist parties of the less advanced countries, and correct thinking inevitably focused their attention on the cities and the proletarian within them, with disastrous consequences. A bigger transformation of the faith even than Lenin's was required.

The momentous break was made by the military genius among the Chinese communists, Mao Tse-tung. Guerrilla warfare was now presented as the correct staple for a revolutionary movement in a pre-industrial society, was brought to a high scientific pitch of sophistication and expertise, and was offered to the rest of the undeveloped world, as their way forward. Mao had even more difficulty than Lenin and Trotsky had had in persuading his perhaps even more doctrinaire comrades that "the correct Marxist military line" (to be deduced from "the concrete analysis of concrete conditions") was the one he persistently advocated, which they considered mere "guerrilla-ism", and not theirs ("the Li Li-sun line") which he considered mere "Left opportunism".

The jargon was awful, but the stakes were gigantic - the liberation of a revolutionized China - and Mao got it right. His military writings of the later 1930s qualified him to become the Clausewitz of the Third

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membership in the guerrilla forces, in the Armed Forces of Liberation. This gradually this small army creates rank-and-file unity among all parties, as it grows and wins its first victories. Eventually, the future People's Army will beget the party of which it is to be, theoretically, the instrument: essentially the party is the army.

"This," wrote Régis Debray (from whom the just-cited passage is taken), "is the staggering novelty introduced by the Cuban Revolution." Some might argue that the Cuban case was too exceptional to provide a general Latin-American model, but for Debray, publishing *Revolution in the Revolution* in 1967, it really seemed to be one. "Thus ends a divorce of several decades' duration between Marxist theory and revolutionary practice. As tentative and tenuous as the reconciliation may appear, it is the guerrilla movement - master of its own political leadership - that embodies it." The fortunes of battle would ebb and flow and many guerrillas would die, "but others will replace them. Risks must be taken. The union of theory and practice is not an inevitability but a battle, and a battle is won in advance. If this union is not achieved there, it will not be achieved anywhere."

The Cuban model appears to fascinate Scammell, as well it might, for its primary field of action is the poorer parts of his own continent, and the very idea of Cuba so easily touches off pantheon among his fellow-citizens. Of that, as of ideological attitudes or any sort of tendentiousness, there is virtually no trace in his level-headed book. Only in the closing paragraph of his introduction does he very slightly let himself go, with the observation

that all who call themselves Marxists are not agreed on a single political or military posture, though it is hardly surprising that some Marxists, upset by the delays in the historical inevitability that was to bring them final victory, should grasp at what seems a surer means of success, or should fortify themselves with an increasing reliance upon the romantic, the millennial and apocalyptic elements always present in their faith.

He also glances distrustfully at "the Marxist Pol Pot régime of Cambodia" and "the Marxist terrorists who view armed violence as the only weapon which can be used against what they equate, by a linguistic legend, as the latent 'violence' of Western liberal political institutions". This evident distaste will lose him little respect among the austere objective, though many of them may wish to remind him that, however little "structural violence" may truthfully be found in the most genuinely liberal constitutional democracies, there is obviously a very great deal, both "structural" and dynamic, in some of the non-socialist states with which they tend to keep company. If he feels any particular threat from the Cuban-style answer to the systemic violence of repressive Central and South American régimes, he gives no hint of it.

It is impossible however not to share the chilly shudder which comes from between the lines of his brief scrutiny of contemporary Soviet forays into the science of war. Reagan and Pentagonians may harbour stereotypes of the Muscovite mind and may themselves be ignorant, suspicious and provocative, but their approach to the world beyond their

own back-yard can't be more alarming than that on view in Scammell's last batch of extracts from easily available translated sources (Sokolovskii, Byely, Krupnov and Gorbokov). It seems reasonable to accept them as basically representative - but of what? These are "authoritative" texts, no doubt about it, but only skilled Krenlinologists can judge whether they mean everything they say or, instead, are saying what they have in say while meaning something rather different. Their uniform readiness for, even expectation of, nuclear assault is (unfortunately) understandable enough, given the history of nuclear policy since 1945. Their apparent inability, however, to see or to imagine a pluralist world instead of one divided sharply into "socialist" and "capitalist" social systems, and their scenarios of "decisive armed collision" between them and of the consequent "proletarianisation", at long last, of the advanced capitalist countries' working classes - this is both which it would be nice to shrug off with the mirthful contempt it deserves, were it not such exceptionally dangerous bosh.

Readers who want to become better acquainted with it will get a little but not much help from the footnotes to the introduction, which is all Scammell provides in the way of scholarly apparatus. It is a pity that he did not annotate the extracts, some of which could certainly benefit from it, instead of so largely repeating his (admirable) opening introductory matter in the introductions to the several sections. And when his book goes into a second edition, it may make sure that the printing on pp 225 (around lines 14-15) and 235 (3-4 lines up) and the spelling of Lenin in the index are made correct.

## Collecting clients

By K. G. Robbins

JOHN DARWIN:

Britain, Egypt and the Middle East: Imperial policy in the aftermath of war, 1918-1922. 333pp. Macmillan. £20. 0 333 27073 B

Discerning the demise of the British Empire has become an engaging academic activity. Some historians are not afraid of the paradox that late-nineteenth-century expansion was an indication of decline. Even at its height (whenever that precisely was), judicious scholars have discovered politicians and officials who were acutely conscious of the cracks in the imperial fabric. Yet, despite all the strain, the "Weary Titan" staggered through the Great War and, amid hints of mortality, was more extensive at its close than it had been when the conflict began. John Darwin's penetrating new study begins at this point. The jacket on his book has a photograph of Winston Churchill visiting the Pyramids during a trip to Egypt as Colonial Secretary in March 1921. Like other members of his official party, he is doing his best to smile benignly astride a camel. One (more suitably attired) "native" stands in the foreground, looking at the British. A sphinx peers down enigmatically on the scene. Where are the British going? Who is in control? It is against this background that the author provides some helpful answers to this middle of the sands.

He is not, in general, concerned with grand debate about the fate of empire. His opening chapter on the traditions of imperial policy is modest in scope though sound in substance. He is content to reiterate the view that British foreign policy before 1914 was fundamentally defensive in character. Parliamentary sanction for intervention or annexation could be obtained, but it was not to be undertaken lightly; overseas expeditions were hazardous. And, despite the alarm of the Boer War, perhaps diplomatic means could preserve the empire by exploiting divisions among rivals. So long as caution was exercised, the task of preservation was manageable. The author sees little sign, prior to the outbreak of war in 1914, either internally or externally, of that intense pressure which was to lead the empire to a reappraisal of the scope and manner of imperial control after 1918. The war itself soon led to the questioning of many old assumptions. By 1916, a "forward" policy, at least in the Middle East, was no longer out of the question. The safeguarding of oil, though not dominant, became increasingly important. Such a strategy might well require the Indian army to enforce it; something which, in turn, would stress the continued importance of India itself in the imperial network. There were those (and Darwin instances Milner) who as late as June 1918 could envisage France and Italy being driven out of the war - in which case Britain might come to depend on supplies from India and Australia. At any rate, whatever their diverse backgrounds, he sees the leaders of the coalition sharing a common conviction, that Britain's place in the world rested on her possession of a great overseas empire.

It soon became clear, however, in 1919 that a new expansion of the British Empire on a grand scale was not feasible. The domestic environment was not favourable to the maintenance of significant military commitments, even if the country could have afforded it. A careful chapter (though necessarily written before publication), looks at the politics of the coalition government to bring out how limited was its scope for adventure. Developments within India and Egypt, and the domestic-imperial crisis represented by Ireland, combined in what the author calls an "intimidating concatenation" to produce anxiety on a scale not anticipated.

Having stated the general context, therefore, the rest of the book is devoted to a careful analysis of British policy in Egypt and the Middle East. Darwin sketches in the intercal developments in the area which caused the problems in the first place, but he is less concerned with the evolution of "nationalism" as such than with the perceptions of British officials on the spot and the Cabinet. He has a shrewd eye for the tensions within the Cabinet itself, some personal, some over policy issues. He has no doubt that it was the Prime Minister who could sway the issue. Gradually, we see ministers, on the whole, accepting the view that British interests were best served by relaxing British surveillance over Egyptian internal affairs. This could be so only as long as the monopoly of foreign influence was maintained. Darwin is emphatic on this point. The agreement of 1922 was not the capitulation of an enfeebled power but a husbanding of strength for where it might need to be directly deployed in the interests of the imperial system. The advocates of conciliation were generally proconsular and Conservative. In the context of Ireland it did no harm for Lloyd George to appear to be more imperialist than the imperialists.

The focus in the third part of the book shifts north and east. There were nearly a million British and Indian troops in the Middle East at the end of the war. In the triangle represented by Constantinople, the Caspian and India, Britain was dominant. Moreover, while, in 1916, promises had been made to France without too much anxiety, the scene was transformed by the defeat of Turkey and the decline, at least for the time being, of Russia. In this context, France was now a menace and hindered the consolidation of the network of client collaborators sought by Curzon. Darwin patiently explains the conflicts which the position engendered. Curzon, he believes, was convinced that the military defeat of Turkey was inadequate if it was not accompanied by the end of her special status in the Islamic world. Lloyd George, too, had ambitious plans - which depended upon a sustained Hellenic revival. Colleagues began to worry about costs and the military presence, and Edwin Montagu went on worrying about the followers of Islam in India. The author skilfully traces the path to disaster. On Chanak itself and how the Cabinet reacted to the crisis, where, in an article to which he has written at greater length elsewhere, he refers only in his final reference note. If at times the argument seems a little too subtle, his general conclusion is consonant with the detail he has described. Whatever their shortcomings and misjudgments, there was little in the manoeuvres of ministers to suggest that there was an overall loss of confidence in the future of the British world-system.

After a short - perhaps too short - excursus on Indian policy and a brief discussion of oil which suggests that the search for a monopoly cannot be considered the key to the strategy of the coalition in the Middle East, Darwin recapitulates this fundamental argument. The immediate post-war years seemed to demand a new basis for the exercise of authority and a different attitude to "subject peoples". That proved difficult to devise and maintain, but not impossible. There was no pervasive general pessimism nor a "servile collapse in the face of insurgent nationalism". Certainly, the bubble of extravagant "war imperialism" was pricked, but neither in Egypt nor in the rest of the Middle East was nationalism so potent that the foundations of empire were shattered. And, after all, imperial rule had never been free from anxiety.

Dr Darwin has written a thoughtful and persuasive book, although some readers will wonder about the virtual exclusion of any discussion of the place of Palestine in this Middle Eastern constellation. Even the initial characterization of Balfour and description of his views makes no mention of the declaration concerning a National Home for the Jews. In a book with this title, more than a passing reference would seem to have been in order.

## Decadence and derangement

By Stanley Weintraub

ROBERT GREEN:

Ford Madox Ford: Prose and Poetics. 218pp. Cambridge University Press. £16.50. 0 521 23610 X

It is appropriate, since Ford Madox Ford's best novel is one of delayed perceptions, that perception of Ford as a major writer has been so long in materializing. That recognition, once so grudging, now shows signs of turning into an academic industry, with three new books already published this year.

Robert Green's study of the political content, implicit as well as explicit, in Ford's writings, demonstrates that Ford, even in his early historical novels, concerned himself with the condition of England. For the most part, however, when he has not been dismissed as a Pre-Raphaelite anachronism, a purveyor of a sentimental, nostalgic, late-Victorian outlook characterized by his last Tory gentleman, the much-sinned-against Christopher Tietjens of *Parade's End*, Ford has been valued as an artist who placed technique above content.

For Green, such a view is a hasty generalization. Ford, he notes, was fond of describing himself during the Edwardian years, as a "Tory revolutionary", faithful to the traditional primacy of landed aristocracy and Established Church, but hostile to imperial sway over peoples who should rule themselves. The early *Inheritors* (1901), a science-fiction collaboration with Joseph Conrad (who had similar anti-colonial ideas), was a thinly disguised attack on the politicians he blamed for the Boer War. Nevertheless, Ford was sceptical of both Liberalism and Labour, seeing only more bureaucracy - "an unconcerned, soulless... machine".

To earn a livelihood, Ford churned out a book or more every year until 1915. Since he looked backward more hopefully than he looked forward, Green blames a "lack of any coherent vision of the future" for the "fractured endings" of Ford's contemporary novels. One might more convincingly blame his technical experiments, his slipshod haste, his uninspired plotting and cardboard characterization. Still, during those years he did drift into the Liberal Party when the Chamberlain faction dominated the Conservatives, only to find out again a few years later, drifting thereafter no political home. Although his *English Review*, founded in 1909, proclaimed non-commitment while publishing articles supporting the classes against the masses, Ford also printed proletarian rebels like D. H. Lawrence - countering, possibly, that such content with modern literary sensibility would eventually erode his loyalties to a regressive, if comfortable, social code.

Ford's fiction up to 1914 bored him as much as it bored his dwindling public. "He was never to write as many undistinguished novels so quickly," Green writes. Even there Ford's pre-war characters include (in *A Case*) a wealthy young landowner of neurotic tendencies who somehow becomes Foreign Secretary - certainly at least the beginnings of some doubts about the traditional ruling class. Dudley Leister's servant in *What may be the only good line among seven novels in five years* when he observes, as might have Oscar Wilde's valet Lane in *Ennui*, "It's only gentlemen of leisure who can think of their hats at all times". Even so, Ford found liberal democracy (Greece quotes Arthur Mizener's biography) dominated by "shabby capitalists, venal politicians, and an electorate stuffed with fatuous ideas of universal education". What remains surprising, even for a novelist always able to swallow his own autobiographical inventions, is that although his parents were a German Catholic journalist and the daughter of a rarely-prosperous Bohemian London painter, he continued to claim that he was "ex officio a mem-

ber of the ruling classes", and thus unable to accept "the vast number of contradictory opinions that are necessary to a 'Progressive'" of his day.

The war - at first - changed nothing. Ford, still burdened with his German surname, Hueffer, quickly turned out two propaganda books extolling traditional Englishness and worrying that England had become much like Germany, too "socialist", too "materialist". Germany was the embodiment of Ford's nightmare of total state control, already making its inroads into his England. The "public school spirit" - in many ways the finest product of a civilization - he mourned as "already on the wane", its traditions "exploited".

His own explosion would come, quietly, in the restrained technical brilliance of *The Good Soldier* (1915), the first chapters of which fittingly appeared in Wyndham Lewis's avant-garde (and short-lived) *Blast*. Ambivalence and unreliability are the constituents of the novel; no character is offered as a model of humane behaviour, and there is no single standard of veracity. The interlocking complexities of the now-familiar plot unwind like a formal dance, recalling Wilde's claim in *Dorian Gray* (unmentioned by Green) that "the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium... An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style". Growing up as a self-confessed disciple of Rossetti, and maturing in the 1890s, Ford seems to have returned to such insights when faced with the contradictions of a world in which respectability had replaced responsibility. When stan-

dards collapse, one is left with style. "The moth may suck Versailles; the Trianon may fall," Ford's uncertain narrator, John Dowell, writes painfully: "surely the mind of the minutist itself is dancing itself away into the furthest stars."

In *The Good Soldier's* nihilistic world of late summer 1914, poignant and horror mesh, in the sprawling post-war tetralogy of the 1920s, *Parade's End*, Ford attempted to reconstruct what was usable in the old world order he once celebrated, the poignancy and horror now counterpointed in a work of symphonic rather than chamber proportions. Educated by betrayal and fidelity in love and war, Christopher Tietjens makes decisions in the closing sections of the cycle which the pre-war Ford could not have countenanced. The post-war Tietjens rejects the public school authority of the Civil Service, and his upper-class bitch-goddess of a wife, scowling his past, in Green's words, "to live in his wits as an antique-dealer and small-holder; and to live with an intensely loyal woman of inferior social status. These [choices] could scarcely have been made by the Tietjens of *Some Do Not*", the first novel in the series.

Whatever the controversies over whether the stylistically difficult fourth novel, *Last Post*, is an artistic exorcism which breaks the continuity of the cycle, Green sees it as essential. "From the standpoint of *Last Post* we look back on *Some Do Not* as being almost an innocent vision... *Last Post* makes us see that *Parade's End* is not only about the derangements caused by the war [but also] the changes in seeing and

rendering the world between 1912 and 1920... Ford is so faithful to the historical realities of the decade... that he uses the changing form of the quartet to reveal the historical genesis of modernism itself."

Tietjens renounces "parades" - the discredited inherited codes. The war "had ennobled him and hardened him. There was no other way to look at it. It had made him reach a point at which he would no longer stand unhearing things... Feudalism was finished, its last vestiges were gone. It held no place for him". Nor for Ford himself. But the war last novels, and the more colourful memoir writings of his final decade, suggest that the struggle to create *Parade's End* had used Ford up as an imaginative writer. Green is hard-pressed, too, to find substantive political implications in the writings of the 1930s, although he notes that Ford "disconnected himself from France" and hoped that Hitler's end - "soon" - may be a long stay in a cage in the Tiergarten of some small South German town. The failed thriller *Vine & Roy* (1934) posits a conflict for power in France between royalists and Communists, some of whom are "humanitarian". One, a M. Arzpanopou, represents to Green, in a rare bit of wit, "a figure whose very name exemplifies Ford's confusion of ideology with gastronomy". At the end in 1939 Ford was working on "Left Turn", a novel about the radical intelligentsia of the 1930s.

Even the dedicated Robert Green must gloss over some of Ford's thirty-two novels and nearly eighty poems, having established that there is a political context in which to

## Romantic conduit

By Stoddard Martin

J. R. HAMMOND:

An Edgar Allan Poe Companion. 205pp. Macmillan. £15. 0 333 27571 3

RAYMOND FOYE (Editor)

The Unknown Poe. An anthology of fugitive writings by Edgar Allan Poe. 117pp. San Francisco: City Lights Books. \$5.95. 0 87286 110 4

Thomas Mann regarded Poe's "William Wilson" as one of the great short stories. Conrad was influenced by Poe's *Doppelgänger*. The Brownings admired Poe's poetry. And in his *Poe Companion* J. R. Hammond reminds us that T. S. Eliot singled out this American precursor for grudging praise. Hammond's claims for Poe's originality as poet, critic, and storyteller are grand; but just how original was he? Hammond mentions "the Shelley-Godwin circle" as an influence on him - *Caleb Williams*, *Frankenstein* and *The Last Man*. He also points out that Poe's most important aesthetic statement - that a poem must give pleasure not truth, that music is essential, that the ultimate object is "our most indefinite conception" - came almost verbatim from *Biographia Literaria*. Poe in fact was the conduit through which many early Romantic motifs were passed on to French writers of the late nineteenth century, who in turn passed them on to Wilde, Symonds, Yeats, and all too little is known about Poe's reading; and sometimes the impression is left that ideas leapt from his skull like Athena from the forehead of Zeus.

The *Unknown Poe* gives some indication of Poe's early interests and reading. Raymond Foye includes a fragment called "Shelley" in which Poe praises Shelley for his qualities of "singleness", "speaking to his own self alone", but condemns him for creating a "school of lawlessness" and brands his poems "rhapsodies", "rough notes", and "stenographic memoranda". Foye also includes a piece entitled "The Flame of Love" in which Poe observes that Byron's

"boyish post-love" for Mary Chaworth could not immediately and "any maiden not immediately and positively repulsive", for it was "the incarnation of the ideal that haunted the fancy of the poet". Poe gave the most extreme expression in English of the aspiration to verbal music and the solitary ideal. This is what attracted the French. *The Unknown Poe* reminds us that, were it not for Baudelaire, Poe might have been lost to posterity. Five volumes of Baudelaire's complete works were translations of Poe. Two of Baudelaire's introductions to these are included by Foye. The pieces are typical of the French critical tendency to referred autobiography. Poe may have been remarkably similar to him in background, looks, and sensibility; but he was consistently more scientific, practical, and humorous than Baudelaire liked to maintain.

For a century Poe was presumed to be an anomaly in American literature. Both Hammond and Foye decry this error, but neither offers an adequate assessment of his influence. Hammond spends so much time on the seminal place of Poe's work in crime and science fiction that when he gets to the relationship of *Arthur Gordon Pym* to *Moby Dick* he mare-

ly says "much has been written" and refers us in a footnote to Harold Beaver's appendix to the Penguin edition of *Pym*. In another footnote Hammond mentions that Henry James wrote about Poe, yet nowhere does he consider James's debt to the other great American manipulator of the undependable first person. Hammond mentions that Jack London was inspired by "The Masque of the Red Death" when he wrote *The Scarlet Plague*; but what of the fact that the narrator of *The Sea Wolf* is the author of a study on Poe, or that the whole of *The Mutiny of the Elsinore*, which starts in Baltimore and goes to the South Pole, may be a version of *Arthur Gordon Pym*? Hemingway's admiration for Poe is not mentioned. Nor is the debt of the "Tough Guys": James M. Cain for his variations on the obsessive first person; Hammett and Chandler for detectives deriving (via Conan Doyle) from Dupin, and for fascination with the decadent, the rarefied, and the perverse.

As founder of the H. G. Wells Society, Hammond is better at pointing out the benefits of Poe to the work of Kerouac and Ginsberg as the fruition of the four conditions for happiness that Baudelaire liked to quote from Poe: "life in the open air, the love of a woman, detachment from all ambition, and the creation of a new beauty".

Baggiebing's attempt to trace Mallarmé's allegorical mode - defined by reference to Jung - falters immediately in having to write off the naturalism of *The Naked and the Dead* as "derivative" and "mechanistic", simply because it is not allegorical; but the thesis is generally fruitful. Baggiebing emphasizes the intensity of Mallarmé's Transcendentalism, his efforts towards "heroic consciousness" and his use of the "hero as metaphor", as well as his dissatisfaction with a fictional technique which denied him a fully individual voice. Perhaps the analysis of the novels of the 1950s and early 60s is too programmatic and literary, but the reporting, or rather the vision, of the Kennedy and Vietnam periods, narrated by the "non-fiction hero", that protean person called Mallarmé, is greatly enhanced by Baggiebing's perspective.

Baggiebing also illuminates less-favoured works of the 1970s such as *Of a Fire on the Moon* and *The Right*, by suggesting that they reveal a shift in ideas rather than a repetition of the previously positioned dualisms - life and technology, man and woman, rebel and conformist. The important comparison with Carlyle is strongly made, but it is disappointing not to find here Lawrence or Nietzsche - influences far closer than Jung, whose theory of archetypes, ill-fits Mallarmé's robust existentialism.

## Living forces

By Rupert Christiansen

ROBERT J. BEGIEBING:

Acts of Regeneration. Allegory and Archetype in the Works of Norman Mailer. 209pp. University of Missouri Press. £12. 0 8262 0310 8

Norman Mailer's moralism has always had a do-or-die quality - "The final purpose of art is to intensify, to exacerbate, the moral consciousness of people", he wrote - and he has been ever undaunted by the highest issues. Robert Begiebing sees Mailer's books as "a series of explorations into the forces operating in our lives" to which "the principle theme is the struggle of

sketch and critical assessments. Hammond's occasional fulsome ness is no worse than that of earlier Poe partisans, and the book should prove useful to students. The *Unknown Poe* will be more exciting to them. The title is a misnomer; certainly the longest prose piece, "The Imp of the Perverse", is available in anthologies. But the collection is a publication with a purpose. Lawrence Ferlinghetti "suggested the need for such a book" and City Lights have published it. Ferlinghetti and what is left of his Beat poet crowd are still concerned with bringing the Left Back to America via North Beach - nearly half *The Unknown Poe* is given over to encomiums by famous Decadents, Symbolists, and Surrealists. City Lights follows Baudelaire in regarding Poe's fate as the fault of a masculinistic, philistine America; he is celebrated as a precursor in a literary insurrection that really only exploded in the 1950s. It is an interesting position, but one that needs further exploration. Can we really see the work of Kerouac and Ginsberg as the fruition of the four conditions for happiness that Baudelaire liked to quote from Poe: "life in the open air, the love of a woman, detachment from all ambition, and the creation of a new beauty"?

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life against death". Such ambition has its dangers: Diana Trilling justifiably claimed that *Armies of the Night* "makes a tragic confrontation of what was in substance only a nervous worry". For the author of this monograph, however, the point is precisely that Mailer is neither novelist nor reporter, but visionary allegorist, writing texts "in which the material world is given transcendental meaning".

Begiebing's attempt to trace Mailer's allegorical mode - defined by reference to Jung - falters immediately in having to write off the naturalism of *The Naked and the Dead* as "derivative" and "mechanistic", simply because it is not allegorical; but the thesis is generally fruitful. Baggiebing emphasizes the intensity of Mallarmé's Transcendentalism, his efforts towards "heroic consciousness" and his use of the "hero as metaphor", as well as his dissatisfaction with a fictional technique which denied him a fully individual voice. Perhaps the analysis of the novels of the 1950s and early 60s is too programmatic and literary, but the reporting, or rather the vision, of the Kennedy and Vietnam periods, narrated by the "non-fiction hero", that protean person called Mallarmé, is greatly enhanced by Baggiebing's perspective.

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# The Euboeans who stayed at home

By David Ridgway

M. R. POPHAM and L. H. SACKETT

**Lefkandi I**  
The Iron Age: The Settlement and the Cemeteries  
Plates Volume, 284 plates, £27. Text Volume, 464pp, £46.  
Thames and Hudson for the British School of Archaeology at Athens  
0 500 96014 3

The Euboeans were the first Greeks to revive commercial relations with the non-Greek world at the end of the post-Mycenaean Dark Age. They were trading with the indigenous Iron Age inhabitants of Campania and Etruria early in the eighth century BC, and these pre-colonial exchanges were soon put on a firmer footing with the establishment of a permanent Euboean home at Pithekoussai (Lacus Anienus/Ischia), within sight of the Italian mainland at the north end of the Bay of Naples. Pithekoussai acted as a Western clearing-house for the advanced technology, literacy and new ideas of all kinds brought from Greece and Syria, where Euboeans had had a stake since the late ninth century in the multi-national emporium of Al Mina at the mouth of the Orontes.

Appreciation of Euboea's vital role in ending the isolation of early Greece is derived primarily from the findings of post-war archaeology. It was not until 1966 that the excavator of Pithekoussai, Giorgio Buchner, felt able to declare bluntly that "with the possession of the base at Al Mina in the East and that of Pithekoussai in the West, the Euboeans were, from about 775 to 700 ac, the masters of the trade between the Eastern Mediterranean and Central Italy". This being the case, we might be forgiven for expecting to read ancient and modern accounts of later Euboean developments, comparable with those attained by Athens and Corinth. There are no such accounts, and it is clear that there were no such developments. The reason seems to be concealed in the ancient literary references to what Oswyn Murray has defined as a "gentleman's war", fought – apparently around 700 – between the two main Euboean towns, Chalcis and Eretria, for possession of the Lelantine Plain. Three centuries later, Thucydides recalled that "the rest of the Greek world also divided in alliance with one side or the other" in this conflict – which suggests that eighteenth-century Euboean affairs were important enough to evoke concrete expression of aristocratic guest-friendship on the contemporary Homeric scale. We do not know who won the "Lelantine War", the evidence of archaeology indicates that Euboea's foreign trade was among the losses, and that by 700 others were already reaping the benefits of her pioneering Eastern and Western enterprises.

The achievements of the early Euboean navigators had been largely forgotten when Greek history came to be written, and excavation can give us no more than a pale reflection of them. Worse still, as in the case of the Phoenicians, we know more about the ninth and eighth-century Euboeans who went abroad than we do about those who stayed at home. Chalcis lies beneath the modern town of the same name, and is thus the only early Greek centre of obvious importance that has hardly been excavated at all; its territory happens to have supported substantial human occupation from at least the fourteenth century ac. In sharp contrast, the current Greek and Swiss excavations at Eretria have so far revealed no signs of life prior to the late ninth. In these tantalizing circumstances, nothing could be more welcome than definitive publication of the 1964-1970 excavations conducted by the British School at Athens near Lefkandi, strategically – and perhaps uncomfortably – situated on the coast halfway between Chalcis and Eretria.

Lefkandi is revealed in this highly technical report as a major Bronze Age and Iron Age centre of which only a very small portion has been opened. The present pair of volumes describe, illustrate and interpret the results relating to the original object of the excavation: the Iron Age settlement, accompanied by no fewer than five separate burial grounds discovered by chance and excavated in collaboration with the Greek Archaeological Service. In due course, a second instalment will account for the earlier periods attested beneath the Iron Age levels: a large and intensively occupied Late Bronze Age settlement and, below this again, further evidence for Early and Middle Bronze Age habitation.

In round figures, the period represented to differing degrees on the component sites described in *Lefkandi I* extends from 1100 to 700 ac, and is divided into four approximately dated phases: Submycenaean (1100-1050), Protogeometric (1050-900), Sub-Protogeometric (900-750) and Late Geometric (750-700), with six subdivisions between 1050 and 750. This somewhat arcane terminology is based on the classification of stratified pottery, which provides the essential framework of stylistic development for conversion into absolute chronology by the reliable association (at Lefkandi or elsewhere) of suitably diagnostic pieces with items of known date. The recognition and deployment of ceramic material in this way – and in this massive quantity – required meticulous attention to detail coupled with the breadth of vision that keeps the wood as well as the trees in sight at all times: rare and unfashionable qualities, combined to brilliant effect in the late Vincent Desborough's critical study of the pottery in the Submycenaean – Sub-Protogeometric range (1100-750), submitted to the editors only four weeks before his death in July 1978.

Eastern and Western preferences for particular types of Euboean pottery can now be compared in greater detail with the goods available at home. The sustained popularity of Euboean *skyphoi* (drinking-cups) abroad is thus seen to be even more striking than it was before. Some of the exported examples will have belonged to emigrants, while others were surely articles of trade in their own right; perhaps we should consider the potential relevance of this most personal of vase-forms to the consumption of a specifically Euboean beverage – like the tea which brought its own specialized drinking equipment from China to Europe in the seventeenth century ad. Meanwhile, Desborough's analysis of the *skyphoi*-type with pendant concentric semi-circles painted between its trans-

## Braving the basalt

By Michael Roaf

S. W. HELMS

**Jawa**  
Lost City of the Black Desert  
269pp. Methuen. £14.95.  
0 416 74080 4

Unlike most reports of archaeological excavations, this is not a straightforward, dry-as-dust account of what was found where, with dull discussions of the chronology and style of structures and objects; instead it is an imaginative, personal reconstruction of what Svend Helms thinks might have happened in Jawa, just over 5,000 years ago, and the story he so vividly tells has the sort of plot more often found in science-fiction fantasies than in serious academic works. The illusion of being in the realm of science fiction is increased by the melodramatic names of the places that Helms has coined – the Black Desert, *bilad ash-shaytan* (the country of the devil), the Road of the Rising Sun – and by the occasional Arabic words and place-names which bring Frank Herbert's *Dune* to mind. Furthermore, numerous carefully worked scientific calculations throughout the text encourage the reader to believe in what is at first sight an incredible, alien world.

The story is indeed one of epic and high adventure: an ousted agricultural urban community from north-east Syria embarks on a long, hard journey to the promised land only to be diverted at the last moment into one of the most inhospitable regions of the earth, the basalt barrier which stretches across the borders of Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. There at Jawa in Jordan this band of between 1,520 and 2,280 souls settles and through technological brilliance daringly attempts to wrest a living from the shallow soil by building dams, canals, and reservoirs to control and trap the fierce winter rains and floods and thus to provide sufficient water to last over the fendishly hot summer season. According to Helms, their hard-won success contained the seeds of their own destruction, for by establishing a reliable perennial water supply they attracted vast numbers of parasitic nomadic herdsmen, the so-called "Old Men of Arabia", who previously had eked out a precarious existence in the surrounding desert.

The story unfolds as one of ethnic and cultural tension between the "urban spacemen" and the indigenous "Old Men". Initially the natives were contented both technologically and ethnologically. Between 1,858 and 2,786 of them were allowed to settle in the outer town beneath the high black walls of the upper town, where their colonial masters lived. Soon, however, the natives outnumbered the colonists and the balance of power shifted. In the fourth or fifth summer after the arrival of the urban agriculturalists Jawa was attacked by the "Old Men of Arabia" who, aided by their cousins living in the outer town, succeeded in breaching the walls of the upper town and defeating their erstwhile rulers. The "Old Men" tried to amuse the enterprise of those they had conquered but, lacking the necessary expertise, their attempt to control the war supply failed and after a brief period they were forced to abandon this experiment in urban life in the Black Desert.

A thousand years later there was a Second Foundation: the citadel of Jawa was re-occupied by people of the Middle Bronze Age. But this attempt too was short-lived and Jawa with its elaborate water systems, its massive fortification walls, and its urban character reverted to its traditional role as a seasonal watering-hole for the "Old Men of Arabia".

Helms's account of the results of his work at Jawa is an exciting one and it is told in a compelling style, with much of the basic evidence for his hypotheses presented to the text together with fine illustrations and detailed calculations of the various elements necessary for the life-

les is especially informative: favoured throughout Sub-Protogeometric, it had already been developed before 900 in Late Protogeometric – and developed moreover at Lefkandi or in its surrounding region. The Lefkandi series, which the overseas occurrences of this and of related types can be engaged and further assessed in the new light shed by items imported to Lefkandi. From the Protogeometric phase onwards, in fact, a number of finds bear witness to reciprocity of contact with northern Greece, the Islands, Attica, Cyprus and the Levant; most remarkably, the appearance of a Syrian Palestinian juglet in a late eleventh-century tomb pre-dates the Euboean presence at Al Mina by two centuries.

The old word "Sub-Protogeometric" accurately reflects an odd situation. Between 900 and 750, the output of the Lefkandi potters was extraordinarily unenterprising. While new Early and Middle Geometric styles were being invented in other parts of Greece, notably Athens, the Lefkandians were content to use and to export what can only be classified as devolved Protogeometric vases. Far from implying an inward-looking or lethargic society, this ceramic conservatism actually prompts the conclusion that, in the period indicated, the Euboeans had chosen – or had been constrained to find – more profitable ways of occupying their time at home than less than abroad.

Significantly, a context dated around 900 yielded fragments of cribbles and lost-wax moulds: foundry dust, which shows that metal was being melted on the site in preparation for sophisticated casting. On this basis, Hector Catling argues controversially for continuous development in local metallurgy, and against reintroduction of bronze-working expertise to Greece at the end of the Dark Age. Neither model precludes the presence at Lefkandi of a bronze-smith, and both accord well with other evidence: for an outstanding degree of prosperity that lasted there until the late ninth century. To date, no contemporary centre on the Greek mainland has produced anything like the material wealth attested at Lefkandi in this phase: impressive quantities of gold (including ear-rings of Macedonian and Phoenician origin), a mass of Egyptianizing figurines, beads of

amber and crystal, vessels of faience and bronze, and a Cypriot bronze mace-head. For good measure, a terracotta centaur (divided between two early ninth-century tombs) points to Cyprus for the method of its manufacture and to Thessaly as the homeland of its subject; this unique figure is one of the most memorable surviving pieces of early Greek sculpture.

After about 825, occupation at Lefkandi continues on a reduced scale until hurried abandonment and final destruction around 600 – Lefkandi was presumably a casualty of the Lelantine War. By 750, the persistent Protogeometric tradition in pottery had at last been supplanted by the eclectic but distinctive Euboean Late Geometric wares familiar at Al Mina and Pithekoussai. No Late Geometric graves have been found in the Lefkandi burial grounds; and John Boardman prefaces his account of the sherds from the settlement with the frank warning that the classes to which they belong are better represented in the Greek and Swiss excavations at Eretria, which comes to prominence as Lefkandi declines. The latter feature could be taken as confirmation of the Swiss excavators' theory that Lefkandi is the "Old Eretria" of the ancient written sources. A population movement (of 15 km) in the late ninth century from Lefkandi to "New Eretria" is certainly feasible on the archaeological evidence presently available from both centres; the possibility that nothing more formal was involved emerges from Mervyn Popham's prudent distinction between internal migration and the transfer of a name. When the Augustan geographer Strabo attributed the foundation of Pithekoussai to Chalcidians and Eretrians, which Eretria did he have in mind? We still do not know. By his time, could not "Chalcidians and Eretrians" be no more than a literary synonym for Euboeans from anywhere – including those from a site long since deserted, and hence nameless?

The editors' historical conclusions are more cautious than this reviewer's, and understandably so: throughout, an almost embarrassing volume of material was recovered from a very small proportion of the whole site. Although many hypotheses are thoughtfully reviewed, there is simply not enough internal evidence to account for the internal contraction of Lefkandi after 825 and for its subsequent slow decline towards 700: "It would be wise to

suspend further conjecture until current excavations at Eretria have further clarified the earlier history of that site, and until something is known of the extent and development of Chalcis at the stage we have been considering." Too true; and there is little to add. But it would be surprising indeed if circumstances on the home front were unaffected by the progress of foreign ventures: 825 is the conventional date for the establishment of the Euboean base at Al Mina; by 750, Pithekoussai had attained its largest size, and was demonstrably capable of supporting a considerable permanent community of metal-workers, potters and traders. Lefkandians based at the mouth of the Orontes in the late ninth century might well have been the first Euboeans to fear of the good prospects in the West; could not the successive contraction and decline of Lefkandi be the result – if only in part – of increasing emigration to the Bay of Naples? However crude, this suggestion does at least try to answer Paul Auberson's famous question about eighth-century Euboea, still open after six years: what is the relationship, chronological and otherwise, between the contemporary phenomena of major upheaval at home and the assumption of major commitments abroad?

It will be clear from the foregoing that the British School at Athens has placed historians of early Greece yet further in its debt. To my knowledge, no one has ever suggested that pottery typology could or should be translated without further ado into historical, social and economic narrative. Nevertheless, where (as at Lefkandi) pottery constitutes by far the most abundant category of evidence retrieved, it provides precisely those basic notions of relative order and absolute time that are indispensable to the achievement of loftier aims. *Lefkandi I* is a massive contribution to the better understanding of an area and a subject of profound significance for the history of the whole Mediterranean. From the seventh century onwards, no small part of Euboea's early promise was fulfilled by the native peoples of Campania, Latium and Etruria: their unique degree of Hellenization owes much to the second and third generation of Euboean emigrants who were left to their own devices at Pithekoussai and Cumae after the events symbolized by the destruction of Lefkandi. We are beginning, at last, to appreciate the tradition to which they were heirs.

support systems of these ancient settlements. But is this interpretation of the archaeological facts the correct one? Here one must regretfully say that Helms's theories are not the only ones which fit the facts and often not the most plausible. Nevertheless the arguments are presented in such a way that the reader can easily distinguish fact from fantasy and can decide for himself how much of the story to believe.

Although this stimulating and controversial study of Jawa will not convince many, and although its conclusions must be treated with caution, Svend Helms has written a fascinating book. He has given us the first comprehensive description of one of the best-preserved and most enigmatic archaeological sites in the Near East, and his reconstruction and analysis of its remarkable water systems are particularly valuable. In addition we must be very grateful to him for discussing many important questions which are all too often ignored by more pedestrian archaeologists.

with his essay on "The Flexible Mind" in John Wood's and Harold G. Coward's *Humanities in the Present Day* (1979). The Festschrift includes contributions from B. D. Meitz (with whom McGreggor worked closely on *Athenian Tribute Lists*) on "Kleon's Assessment of Tribute to Athens", from Harold B. Tritton on "The Themistokles Decree from Troezen: Transmission and Significance", and from K. J. Dover on "The Colloquial Stratum in Classical Attic Prose".

Christie's Contributions, a Festschrift to mark the seventieth birthday of Malcolm Francis McGreggor, Professor of Classics Emeritus at the University of British Columbia, has recently been published (191pp. Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, \$30). The work, which has been edited by George Spencer-Shirlington and the late David Joseph McGreggor, includes a full bibliography of McGreggor's works, beginning with his paper "Eponymous Priests under the Ptolemies" (1933) and concluding

## Credentials of a chronicler

By Jeremy Catto

J. J. N. PALMER (Editor):

**Froissart: Historian**  
203pp. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell.  
£30.  
0 85115 146 9

It is in the nature of great events to generate a mythology: so it has proved with the Persian wars of Greece, the French Revolution, even the Second World War. Sooner or later their epic and tragic potential is given a classic form, and a myth is created: at first a life-giving stimulus to the historian and his public, then a sustaining orthodoxy, and at last, however brilliant, an intellectual detritus, which obstructs understanding with an abiding deposit of preconceptions. For the power of the myth-makers commonly lasts far longer, in attenuated or popularized form, than their reputation as accurate historians: Herodotus' Xerxes, De Thou's Catherine de Medici, Michiel's Robespierre or even John Reed's Lenin have been superseded, exposed or radically modified, but their impression remains.

J. J. N. Palmer and his collaborators now draw our attention to another myth-maker on the grand scale, Jean Froissart, the only contemporary to see the long struggle of Plantagenet and Valois as a single historical theme: a great river with innumerable tributary episodes, with eddies and backwaters, rapids, and one or two cataracts, its outcome not in sight. Everybody's fourteenth century, thereafter, has been Froissart's: Caxton's, the humanists', Holinshed's, Rapin's, Hume's, Chateaubriand's, and Scott's. Only after 1870, with the critical editions of Lucie (still incomplete) and Kervyn de Lettenhove, was Froissart's account systematically compared with documents from the now accessible archives of European states, and less ambitious annals. The result was sobering. The times and places of many episodes were shown to be impossible, the motives of his characters duller than he said; even his named eye-witnesses proved unreliable. What Froissart could contribute to a sound chronography of the fourteenth century was limited. On the other hand, he could not simply be ignored, as some of his stories, like his account of John of Gaunt's capture of Castile, and his shrine at Compostella, were remarkably to the point. So professional historians have relegated him to an indeterminate limbo, from which Mr Palmer and his colleagues, in these ten essays, have set out to rescue him.

There work has been well worth while, because Froissart has so much to tell, often unconsciously, about the participants in war, and something too about the princes and councillors who tried to direct them. We need not follow John Hennessey's suggestion, in his acute analysis of Charles V of France, that Froissart's future reputation should be based on his account of the behaviour of élites in a military and political context: the élites dance to Froissart's tune and behave as he makes them behave for his own literary purpose. For, as the editor and some of the other contributors make clear, there was a literary purpose, and constructive criticism must start by sorting out the genre of the *Chroniques*, their audience, and the circumstances of their composition.

Not all the contributors, it must be said, are prepared to take Froissart on any but their own terms, as a more or less corrupt historical source. For J. W. Sharboone, it is enough to demonstrate his propensity for the fabulous and his failure to seek "some residual element of factual truth or of a feasible political interpretation". Even Pierre Tucco-Chale in his sensitive study of Froissart's Breton tour applies the same criterion: if more generously, concluding that the chronicler must have caught the authentic conversation of his informants, the "new" houses, large houses – with more of Basco de Mauldon. But as other contributors show, neither Froissart's realism nor his elaborate credentials can be taken as evidence of accurate reports. In the end, if Froissart, as Luce started out by stating, "is a world", it is not the world of the Historical Black Prince or Bertrand du

Guesclin. It is the world of the artist himself.

The most significant work to be done on the *Chroniques*, then, is on the text, and three essays converge on a more radical view of its construction. Palmer shows that none of the various versions can have been written before about 1390. The surviving versions of the text of Book One, which differ both in time and in the information they contain, are not successive revisions of a single text; they are separate chronicles made up of selections from the same body of material, made presumably for different patrons or readerships; and the normal rules of textual criticism do not apply. George Diller shows why: Froissart was writing (or more likely dictating) as a story-teller, with all the tricks of a raconteur: "... for I haven't yet got the princes of Blois out of the King of England's prison of preconception. For the power of the myth-makers commonly lasts far longer, in attenuated or popularized form, than their reputation as accurate historians: Herodotus' Xerxes, De Thou's Catherine de Medici, Michiel's Robespierre or even John Reed's Lenin have been superseded, exposed or radically modified, but their impression remains.

correct, the writing of the *Chroniques* becomes comprehensible. Military operations in the Anglo-French war were less and less frequent after 1380, and ceased altogether ten years later in a

## Wealth before wisdom

By Nicholas Davidson

ROBERT FINLAY

**Potities in Renaissance Venice**  
308pp. Benn. £13.95.  
0 510 00085 1

For many years, historians of Renaissance Venice have been divided. Some believe that the city's government was stable and well-meaning, others that it was corrupt and tyrannical. Robert Finlay has now brought the two points of view together: he believes that it was stable because it was corrupt.

This is a neat explanation. Appointment to office was normally decided by a ballot of the Great Council; those appointed were naturally concerned that if they were to offend any section of that Council they would lose the next election. So compromise in government was encouraged by faction in the patriciate who made up the Council: and the dishonesty which characterized the Council was effectively defused by the frequent elections. As an eighteenth-century observer noted: "Here they fight not with blood but with ballots."

Dr Finlay's account is largely based on the interpretations of contemporary diarists, and especially on the Diaries of Marino Sanuto, whose massive manuscript – printed in fifty-eight volumes – allows us to view Venetian politics through the eyes of a contemporary participant. They certainly make more compelling reading than the arid records in the State Archive. Especially interesting are their discussions of patrician motive in the Council: Sanuto explains how members of the twenty-four "old houses" – supposedly descendants of the city's founders – against members of the "new houses", large houses – with more of Basco de Mauldon. But as other contributors show, neither Froissart's realism nor his elaborate credentials can be taken as evidence of accurate reports. In the end, if Froissart, as Luce started out by stating, "is a world", it is not the world of the Historical Black Prince or Bertrand du

generally convenient, if hardly glorious peace. Richard II of England was not interested in the traditional rivalries, while it was becoming evident that Charles VI of France was insane. In this disappointing world, the glorious campaigns of Crécy and Poitiers, the Breton civil war and the Spanish intervention, the free companies and the French *revanche* were sweet, fading memories. This was Froissart's opportunity. He had personal memories of some episodes, and found more material from earlier historians, especially Jean le Bel and the Chandos Herald. He had probably tried his hand at history already. His unusual capacity to combine earthy realism with fantasy and romance had been demonstrated in his early poem *Mohand*, to which an early journey to Scotland had contributed some local colour. Tales of the recent past, concentrating on military exploits, would have an eager, nostalgic public: as passions were still burning and some memories long, different selections of material and a variable bias were only tactful. Patrons were flattered, prejudices indulged. Naturally the *Chroniques*, in their several versions, were an immediate success. Froissart eventually added more books, taking the story up to 1400. But the first book was his real triumph, for there he had created a brilliant, almost Proustian world out of the events of his youth. With real historical insight, he treated the wars as a single theme to which all contemporary events were subordinate. Nobody since has been able to see them in any other way. A great historical myth, only partly false, was born.

Mr Palmer and his colleagues have enabled us to see Froissart in perspective at last. It is a welcome achievement.

commitment revenue, and the sale of votes an essential source of income for an impoverished patriciate. After 1509, office was therefore dominated by the rich, rather than the competent, and real power was concentrated in the smaller executive bodies, whose members were frequently not elected at all.

Sanuto in fact dominates this book, one fifth of whose 288 pages of text cite him as their only source. But is he entirely reliable? As Finlay himself remarks, he was not well considered in his own lifetime: "In all likelihood, most of his contemporaries regarded Sanuto as an indelicate troublemaker", "cranky and intemperate", and he is said to have been "uninfluenced by the reality of Venetian politics, for which he had slight sympathy or understanding". Certainly his own career was unsuccessful, and the Diaries suggest that his opinions were coloured by a growing sense of failure. And what were his sources? Finlay tells us that Sanuto received material from friends, and had privileged access to official records, (as well as a government pension from 1530); but he never quite tells us why. He says that the Diaries were "well-known", but not who had access to them. Were they used by informants for their own advantage? And how complete are they? Sanuto certainly avoided references to events which embarrassed his friends or himself. He had little experience of administration in Venice, and tells us little about it; but since he was disappointed by his failure to be elected, he tells us a great deal about the electoral machinery, and the unprincipled motives of the electors who opposed him. Perhaps his jaundiced reactions affected his sense of proportion.

Our knowledge of Sanuto's character should therefore make us hesitate to trust him, and it seems legitimate to ask whether his picture is entirely convincing even on its own terms. He emphasizes the importance of family connections in politics, for example, and especially the hostility between old and new houses. Andrea Gritti, a member of a new house, was certainly opposed by members of old houses in the dual election of 1523 – but also by Alvise Priuli, from another new house. Is it possible to explain

this by showing that the Gritti were a small clan – only thirty voters in 1527 – and the Priuli a large one – forty-six voters in the same year? But they were both opposed in 1523 by Leonardo Mocenigo, a member, like Gritti, of a new, small house. After his election, Gritti often worked against electoral corruption with Marino Morosini, a member of a large, old house; is it possible to explain this alliance of large with small, new with old, by the fact that both were listed as debtors to the State in 1511 after suffering economically in the wars? Why then was Gritti joined in his campaign against corruption by Francesco di Filippo Foscari, who had been wealthy enough in 1512 to loan 1000 ducats to the State?

The problem is that Sanuto's categories of explanation are unwieldy: framed in terms of prior bloc commitments, they often miss the complexity of individual motivation. They were inspired by a desire to discover the key to electoral success – yet shaped by a scepticism towards the ambitions of those who opposed him. His interest in the machinery of appointment left him little room to consider its purpose, and his explanations seem at a result to be of limited application: only, Finlay admits that "There is, in fact, no echo of the clan division within the Senate or executive councils, no sign that it touched the field of programs and policies." Government by compromise is perhaps not necessarily good government after all.

*Potities in Renaissance Venice* will serve an important function as an account of Sanuto's view of Venetian history, but its wider value is limited by a failure to distance itself effectively from Sanuto himself. It often looks, in fact, as if the elaborate voting systems did break up the influence of family factions: it is no great surprise to learn that between 1507 and 1527, members of old houses won "about 40 per cent" of Council elections when we know already that they made up "35 per cent" of the patriciate. Participants can rarely assess the developments of their own lifetime; Sanuto's scepticism allowed him to find an explanation for everything – but perhaps it inhibited his understanding.

## Pro the Pretender

By John Register

F. J. MCLYNN

**France and the Jacobite Rising of 1745**  
277pp. Edinburgh University Press.  
£15.  
0 85224 404 5

The need for a thorough study of the French involvement in the Jacobite invasion of 1745 has long been felt by historians. Only a scholar who could combine a good knowledge of the Jacobite world with an ability to master the intricacies of the *ancien régime* could hope to achieve the task. F. J. McLynn has certainly penetrated the Jacobite world through his use of the Stuart MSS at Windsor and the series of State Papers. On the French side he relied almost exclusively on the well-thumbed Stuart papers at the Omi d'Orsay, the only new material consists of some War Ministry archives at Vincennes and that fraction of the Maurepas papers that is not in Corbell. There are no forays into private archives or even in the Archives Nationales.

All this might give cause for concern, especially as his book follows so closely upon the appearance of Rohan Butler's masterly life of the young Choiseul, with its extensive use of fresh archives for this period. But Dr McLynn has produced a remarkably lucid and interesting book, for he has a sharp perception of events and has ably disentangled the various strands of French policy. He raises several important questions.

The French had been mesmerized by the apparent absence of an active Jacobite party in England and influenced by a desire not to give offence to their Protestant allies in Germany. They mistakenly believed that the restoration of the Stuarts was something that could be achieved on the cheap (though in the end they had spent 900,000 livres in 1744 and possibly 5 million in 1745-6 which they recouped, as McLynn shows). They also had other irons in the fire in a war that thrived on diversionary activities. McLynn sheds much light on French contacts with leading Jacobites, some, like Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, who came over from England and others, like Walsh and O'Hegerty, who were influential ship-owners based in Nantes and La Rochelle.

Evidence of French errors of judgment and dishonesty leads McLynn to delve into the workings of the French governmental machine and to probe the personalities and prejudices of the king and his chief ministers. In the lens of satisfactory chapter of his book, he begins inauspiciously with an inaccurate list of the four secretaries of state. He makes heavy weather of Louis XV's elegant way of intimating to ministers that they had been promoted to the rank of ministers of state. He states inaccurately that Louis XV always kept princes of the blood out of the council and that much of the detailed work of the latter was done in committees. He has completely misunderstood the reasons given by Michel Antoine for the conflict between Orry and Amelot in 1737 over precedence in the Conseil des Dépêches. Can one really argue that the marquis d'Argenson's enmity for England dated from his period as French ambassador in Portugal? The statement that Philip V was Louis XV's son-in-law (p. 39) is presumably a slip of the pen.

One weak chapter and some minor blemishes cannot, however, obscure the value of a well-written book which cogently explains the problems and dilemmas that beset Louis XV and his ministers when they viewed the Jacobite intervention in the context of a wider European and colonial war. They gave up hope too soon in 1744 and they gave support too late in 1745. That "Protestant wind" on March 6-7, 1744 determined the course of events more than did the intricacies of the royal administration.

Who engineered the invitation to Prince Charles Edward to come secretly to Paris in January 1744? Then, after the failure of their attempt in Mirech to send an invasion force to Maldon in Essex, the French concentrated on the war in Flanders and became lukewarm in their support for the prince, but did they have foreknowledge of his intention to go to Scotland alone in 1745? McLynn concludes that they did not. The French decision not to repeat their support for Charles Edward in August 1745 was, in the author's view, an error of judgment. It was human enough, but the French had allowed 1744 to take the edge off their appetite for a Jacobite diversion. By the time they decided to meet it was too late, and they and the Jacobites found themselves in a vicious circle: Louis XV delayed sending troops until he could be sure Charles Edward was victorious, and Charles Edward could only be victorious if the French sent troops. Consequently the rumour of a French landing, which was again untrue, in December deflected Cumberland only briefly from his northward pursuit of the Jacobites.

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## Visions of redemption

By Joanna Hodge

GEORGE FRIEDMAN:  
The Political Philosophy of the  
Frankfurt School  
312pp. Cornell University Press.  
£9.50.  
0 8014 1279 X

This challenging, if slightly unfocused book, falls into three sections: an account of the intellectual origins of members of the Frankfurt School; an account of the twentieth-century crises in reason, culture, politics and the human psyche; and an account of their search for a resolution of those crises.

In his first section, George Friedman carefully demonstrates the distance between Marx and the members of the so-called school, by invoking what he calls "the fastidious strength" of the Right as the means by which they resist "the shallowness of a purely political and economic liberation." He argues that in the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Freud, and Spengler they found the means to subvert economic interpretations of Marx's work. The work of Freud was certainly of the greatest importance for Herbert Marcuse, but in the cases of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer there can be no doubt that their resistance to economicism is drawn at least as much from the work of Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, whom Mr Friedman mentions, but without attributing to them such pivotal significance.

Mr Friedman also identifies the Judeo distinction, central to Walter Benjamin's work, and to a lesser extent to that of Adorno and Marcuse, between the profanity of

present existence, and the carefully constructed occasions on which "the profane is put aside in order to experience the sacred intimations of the Messianic." He rightly stresses as Marx's the view that one aim of revolutionary politics must be "the abolition of the profane sense of being Jewish" in the Messianic moment of overturning the old order of oppressions and inaugurating the politics of freedom. This discussion is certainly the strongest part of his account of the Frankfurt School's intellectual origins, and it identifies themes of the greatest importance for interpreting not just their work but that of twentieth-century intellectuals in general.

Friedman describes the "Critical Theory" of the Frankfurt School as "the attempt of the unredeemed to glean visions of redemption from the phillistine ossification of the Western European Social Democracies" and the brutal militarism of Stalin. But this theory left members of the school without a politics, and the tragic implications of their disenfranchisement are perhaps to be seen more clearly in Benjamin's inability to choose where to settle in exile, and in his suicide in 1940. Adorno survived the Holocaust in America, and it is largely owing to him that Benjamin's name has not fallen into oblivion. Paradoxically, however, Adorno attempted to combine a critique of bourgeois "ossification" in its technological triumph over nature with endorsing the administration of Konrad Adenauer and his minister of defence, Franz Josef Strauss. This led in 1968 the savage attacks made on Adorno - sometimes in the name of Marcuse - by a new generation of students, who lacked the patience and the time to think through the reasons for his compromise.

These reasons were in fact presented by Adorno and Horkheimer in their joint work of 1944, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which they dedicated to Friedrich Pollock, yet another member of the group, whose work is much less fashionable. In this book they attempted to demonstrate the systematic subversion of the claims of reason involved in the very attempt to realize rational ends.

In the remaining two thirds of his book Friedman describes the various attempts made by members of the school to address this problem. He shows how Adorno's political compromise is reflected in his preoccupation with the negativity and destructiveness of reason, which first cuts itself off from action and the will, and then, by posing problems in universal and neutral terms, cuts itself off from any particular resolution of them. In his *Negative Dialectic* of 1966, Adorno characterized the negativity of reason as a defence against the construction of hegemonic rational systems which, in their illusory claim to completeness, actually become oppressive. Yet in the attempt to mobilize the concept of "negativity" against the tyranny of the Hegelian concept of identity, it too is reappropriated by a tyrannous system, and so Adorno falls into the intellectual's trap of supposing ideas to be a sufficient defence against the oneness of reality.

Adorno's attack on what he calls "positivism" is an attempt to prevent reason becoming oppressive, but it demonstrates more his own preoccupation with the danger of systematic reason than any understanding of his alleged opponent. In this debate, Karl Popper, similarly, his profound respect for the claims of reason makes it impossible for him to endorse Heidegger's critique of universaliz-

ing reason. Adorno, and indeed Friedman, thus suppose, wrongly, that Popper and Heidegger both perform the same mistaken office: "the affirmation of existing conditions", in the sense of total acquiescence to the status quo. In their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno and Horkheimer treat myth as an affirmation of permanence, and suggest that the mistake the Enlightenment made was to try and elevate reason from being a mere instrument for questioning the necessity of the given into a new myth of permanence. It is thus strange that Adorno should polemize so strongly in the name of negativity, for the polemic's success must entail its own failure in the construction of another system of

reason. Friedman is able to discuss Adorno's work with sufficient incisiveness for this paradox to emerge clearly.

Mr Friedman, then, concentrates his attention primarily on Benjamin and Adorno, with Horkheimer and Marcuse as secondary figures. This is entirely reasonable, since these two certainly had interests and preoccupations in common which are of the greatest significance for the very possibility of political philosophy. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that they developed a political philosophy of their own, or that the Frankfurt School as such did so. Indeed, their work makes more sense as the rejection of all academics, and of systematic political philosophy.

## Rules for republicans

By Douglas Johnson

CHARLES RENOUVIER:  
Manuel républicain de l'homme et du citoyen  
176pp. Paris: Garnier.

Charles Renouvier, who lived until 1903, was a philosopher and sage, who was closely associated with the official ideology of the Third Republic. However, as a young man, the son of a deputy who had been in favour of the revolution of 1830, he had turned to radicalism and Saint-Simonism, and had written for the *Revue Indépendante*, associating himself with Pierre Leroux and George Sand. It was therefore as a republican with the reputation of being something of a socialist that he was called upon, in 1848, to assist the Second Republic. This Republic, like its successor, was aware of its pedagogical tasks, and of the need for a civic republicanism to be propagated amongst a population which had just leapt into universal suffrage. This, it seemed, could only be done by the school-teachers of France, and Renouvier was asked to provide a guide for them. The fame, or notoriety, of his publication arose from the controversy it created at a critical moment in the political history of the Second Republic.

Hippolyte Carnot, the son of the Carnot who had organized the victorious armies of the Revolution, had been made Minister of Public Instruction in February 1848, and it was he who commissioned Renouvier to write his *Manuel*, with a view to its being in use in time for the elections of April. But by June the revolution was moving to the right. Carnagiac held the "parti de l'ordre" in check and the principles of republicanism were maintained. But any one suspected of socialism was liable to be challenged, and Carnot, because of his revolutionary background and because he had been appointed in the early, heady days of the revolution, was regarded as a potential enemy. In July he was attacked in the Chamber of Deputies and it was the contents of the *Manuel* which provided a deputy from the Drôme, Bonjean (later to be shot by the Communards), with the opportunity of forcing him to resign.

One passage in particular was a source of embarrassment; that in which the pupil asks his teacher how the rich can be prevented from being idle and the poor protected from being eaten up by the rich. The division into "mangeurs" and "mangés" had a sinister ring and it appeared that the most sedulous doctrines had crept into this republican catechism. Now that this new edition has appeared, however, which includes the second version brought out by Renouvier in response to criticisms of the first, we can see how small a part was really allowed to anything approaching socialism. Maurice Agulhon's careful and informative editing helps one to understand the utopian and idealistic view of themselves which the republicans took. It is no small claim to say that 1848 established in French society "la morale de Jésus Christ" or that their aim was to create a Christian Sparta, and a Greece and a Republic where Greece and Israel would be united and of which Christ himself would be proud to be a citizen.

## Information, please

Thomas Bennet (1673-1728): Rector, St Giles's, Cripplegate, London; Fellow, St John's College, Cambridge; author of *An Essay on the 39 Articles*, 1715. Information is needed of any surviving portraits and about his descendants, such as the "married" names of his three daughters by Elizabeth Hunt of Salisbury, for a study of his bibliographical work with copies of the 39 Articles.

W. L. Williamson, 4253 Helen C. White, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

Raymond Chandler: for an authorized biography dealing with the period after 1945 and with particular reference to the English years, I would be grateful for information concerning both published correspondence between Chandler and Alvaro "Chile" Quevedo and also documentation, photographs, etc., relating to their meetings in England and California.

Andrew Sinclair, c/o Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd, 81 Clapham High Street, London, SW4.

David Low: New Zealand-born political cartoonist, remembered chiefly for his work in the *Evening Standard* in the 1930s and 1940s; personal recollections and unpublished letters, for a biography.

Ian McLaine, Department of History, University of Wollongong, PO Box 111 Wollongong, NSW Australia, 2500.

Morocco before 1912: photographs of pre-Protectorate Morocco for a photographic history of the country. I would like to hear about any private collections. Please do not send any prints in the first instance; if published a fee would be paid.

Richard Pannell, 14 Sandhurst Place, Leeds LS8 3QW.

Barolomeo, Pietro and Francesco Paoletti: any information about plaster casts of engraved gems made by members of the Paoletti family, who were active in Rome at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries.

Martha McCrory, Kunsthistorisches Institut, Via Gluck 44, 50121 Firenze, Italy.

## Mantua's Tennyson Manuscript

By J. B. Trapp

On June 8, 1882 the Vergilian Academy of Mantua sent to each of the "più elite intelligenze del nostro tempo" a printed request for "qualche breve scritto" to mark the nineteenth-hundredth anniversary of the death of their eponymous poet. One of the recipients was Alfred Tennyson: in those happier post-dinner days the simple address "Inghilterra" was enough to find him. A fortnight later on June 23, Avv. Luigi Carnevali wrote a personal letter to Tennyson on behalf of the committee appointed by the Academy to arrange a programme for the occasion. This letter, in English, is printed in Hallam Tennyson's *Materials for a Life of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, IV, 26, and runs, in part:

... We certainly cannot expect your Lordship to come personally to the solemnity but one verse of yours, one writing however small, that could be published in the Vergilian Album will be agreeable, not only to us but to all those who in the civil world do honour to the highest poet ...

The Academy had for some time been considering not only how to honour their great eponymous poet on the nineteenth century of his death, but also the year in which the centenary fell. Similar discussions concerning the correct bimillenary year are now in progress in the correspondence columns of *The Times* and elsewhere. On that occasion the Mantuan Academy decided that 1881 was right, after consultation with a number of international authorities (the University of Oxford, one of those appealed to, prudently sent no answer). The Academy's Vergilian celebrations, however, did not take place until 1882. Today, firmer decisions having been earlier taken, the Vergilian year has already been inaugurated with a discourse at Naples last April. An international congress will meet in Mantua, Rome, Naples and perhaps Brindisi during the week of September 19-25 (Vergil died, according to tradition, on September 20 or 21).

At the same time as they wrote to Tennyson, the Mantuan Academy approached Victor Hugo for a similar favour. Hugo's secretary regretted that the Master's contractual obligations prevented his compliance. Tennyson, more forthcoming, provided what is perhaps the most famous of all English tributes to Vergil, in which, as Douglas Bush has remarked, the "rolling trochee lines suggest something of the sound of the 'Vergilian hexameter'." The poem was despatched to Mantua in August 1882 and receipt acknowledged by the Academy on September 10. It was first printed in *The Nineteenth Century* for September of that year, and first appeared in a published collection as one of *Tiresias and Other Poems* in 1885. In both it was sub-titled *Written at the Request of the Mantuan Academy for the Nineteenth Century of Virgil's Death*.

The Vergilian Album spoken of by the Academy was not issued until 1884, though it is dated 1883. It included Tennyson's poem not only in English, but in a translation into Italian quatrains by Tullio Massarani. Early in 1883 the grateful Academy elected the author an Honorary Associate. His letter of acknowledgment, dated February 27 1883, is in their files.

Hallam Tennyson in his *Manoir*, under the running head "Curious Misprints", tells of his father's reaction:

There was at first a curious misprint in the poem: Thou that singest wheat and woodland, tithe and vineyard! Instead of "tithe and vineyard", recalling to my

father's mind the misprints of earlier poems: in "The Palace of Art", "Europa's mantle blue" for "blew"; in "The Talking Oak", "The modest Cupid of the day" for "modish Cupid"; in "The Princess", "followed up by a hundred hoary does" for "airy does"; in "Guinevere", "To where beyond these lakes there is peace" for "voices".

The reading "tithe" is indeed curious but, as can be seen from the reproduction here published of the autograph manuscript sent by Tennyson to the Mantuan Academy - in whose files it too still lies, unregarded as far as I know - it is not a misprint but a faithful rendering of Tennyson's own slip of the pen (1.5). Other minor variants between the manuscript sheet, with its heading "To Virgil" in the hand of Hallam Tennyson, and the text as first and subsequently printed are: "among" for the printed "amid" in 1.14 (a euphonic change, presumably); "among" in 11.13 and 14 of the manuscript, and "that Ocean-roll" for "thine ocean-roll" in 1.16 (a rhythmic change). There are also

variations, still more minor, in punctuation (a comma after "faith" in 1.2, and a comma for a semi-colon at the end of 1.5), in capitalization of nouns ("Fancy" for "fancy" in 1.4; and "island" for "Island" in 1.18), in the use of ampersand for the spelled-out "and", and in the signature "A. Tennyson" for the "Alfred Tennyson" of *The Nineteenth Century*.

More importantly, the lay-out of the manuscript poem differs from all the published versions, which print it in ten unnumbered stanzas of two lines each, broken in the caesura, so that they look like twice two. Sometimes, even, as in the *Tennyson Research Bulletin*, it has been printed in quatrains. When he sent it to Mantua, Tennyson clearly intended it as a single unit of twenty long trochaic lines, rhyming in couplets. In the Notebooks at Harvard (MS Eng 952.661) the lines are also so written. In the first proofs sent to Tennyson from *The Nineteenth Century*, now in the Tennyson Research Centre at the Central Library, Lincoln, the poem was set in numbered stanzas with the half-lines much overlapped and the second element opening with a capital letter. This was clearly contrary to Tennyson's wishes, and he proposed the curious compromise of lowering the second half-line, beginning it with a lower-case letter except where a capital was dictated by usage and setting it as if continuous with the first. This attempt - as I read it - to preserve his metre was unsuccessful, in spite of his care to make his wishes clear by several means: by proof corrections, by writing out the two second half-lines of the first couplet as and where he wanted them to stand, by transcribing the whole of the second couplet in the same way at the foot of the first page and at the foot of the second page, and the instruction: "initials of every second line to be small with two exceptions Ilon & P".

The printers, though they used a smaller point of type for the published version than for proof, could get the lines into their type area only by breaking them at the caesura. Nevertheless, they managed to convey something closer to Tennyson's wishes than they had in proof. They used a lower-case letter where they could at the beginning of each second half-line, and they overlapped the half-lines to the extent of a word or two only, rather than back to the end of the first word of the first half-line (as in the Eversley and subsequent editions).

In the poem as printed in *Tiresias and Other Poems*, though Tennyson's

prescription as to lower-case letters at the beginning of each second half-line is followed, the half-lines are much more overlapped than in the *Nineteenth Century*. This is true of the proof copies in the Tennyson Research Centre and the British Library, besides the published edition. At the head of *To Virgil* in one of the Research Centre's copies, however, is a note in Hallam Tennyson's hand: "All on one line each two lines throughout poem", with the first two couplets bracketed in emphasis.

When, between its appearance in *The Nineteenth Century* and in *Tiresias*, the poem came out in the Academy's *Album Virgiliano*, it corresponded both textually and in lay-out with the version that has become canonical, that is to say in *Tiresias*. The only differences are that the sub-title *Written at the Request of the Mantuan Academy* is replaced by

ODE  
BY  
ALFRED TENNYSON

and that the final page ends, not with Tennyson's name to the right, but with the by-line *Isle of Wight, September 1882* to the left. It may have been one of the Tennysons who sent the newspaper cutting of the poem which is secured to the manuscript in the Vergilian Academy's files (the string by which it is attached can be seen in my reproduction of the manuscript).

If Hallam Tennyson is to be believed, the Vergilian Academy's printers must have set what Tennyson had written, and Tennyson corrected and emended in proof - as he did in *The Nineteenth Century*. The "misprint" that so amused him could therefore have occurred at the Mantuan proof stage, after publication in *The Nineteenth Century*. These mysteries, and those of the double and pedantic interlocking sequence of manuscript-proof-final printing in *The Nineteenth Century* and in the *Album Virgiliano*, I must leave the Tennysonians to unravel. The textual variants of *The Nineteenth Century* proof in the Tennyson Research Centre I also thankfully resign to them.

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## Rhymes of a conveyancer

By Peter Stead

DOUGLAS PHILLIPS:  
Sir Lewis Morris  
117pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press. £2.50.  
0 7083 0788 4

Born in Carmarthen in 1833, Lewis Morris pioneered what was to become a classic career-pattern for able Welshmen. From the famous local grammar school he went on to the schools at Cowbridge and Sherborne, at Jesus College, Oxford, he took firsts in classical moderations and *literae humaniores*. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, was called to the bar but preferred to practise as a conveyancer. In later life he returned to Carmarthen, stood for Parliament as a Liberal, became prominent in the politics of Welsh education and gave stalwart service as an officer of the developing University College at Aberystwyth. He was knighted in 1895 and died in 1907.

It was a distinguished career, but Morris could think only of his failures. Not many Welsh barristers with political ambitions have failed to get elected. Morris was hurt by this but even more he was disappointed by his failure to secure the Post Laureateship on the death of his friend Tennyson in 1892. To want to be Post Laureate is remarkable enough in itself but it becomes an even stronger ambition when found in the person of a Welsh conveyancing counsel. In the 1870s and 1880s, however, Lewis Morris had become a prolific and best-selling poet. His best known work, *The Epic of Hades*, went through forty-five editions in his lifetime, and all his volumes, including the *Sir Lewis Morris Birthday Book*, went on selling in their thousands and he was second only to Tennyson in terms of acclaim and popularity.

Morris admitted that many of his poems were written "amid the not inappropriate sounds and gloom of the (London) Underground Railway", and one suspects that his books were bought and read by his fellow passengers. There was some praise from high places but Morris knew that it was for the growing middle class that he was writing and he spoke of his own preference for "the wider and not the narrower circle of readers". Like other Victorian poets he later became an institution, an official writer-in-residence,

and Dylan Thomas not unreasonably mocked a poet who could write an "Ode Sung at the First Cooperative Festival" and an "Ode of Welcome to the Trade Union Congress, Swansea", but in those earlier, high-Victorian years he was able to provide precisely the poetic entertainment and comforts that a new and expanding readership required.

In this latest addition to the very handsome and useful *Writers of Wales* series, which Maic Stephens and Brinley Jones edit for the University of Wales, Douglas Phillips makes no exaggerated claims for this forgotten figure. In general he accepts Daniel Lleufer Thomas's conclusion that Morris's chief gift as a poet was that he knew his audience and spoke to it simply, didactically, and optimistically. We are a different audience and there is no reason why these poems should speak to us, but Phillips shows that there were moments of grace and charm, lovely descriptive passages especially of the incomparable Vale of Towyn, even very modern moments of anger and satire, and at least one passage heralding an Anglo-Welsh style:

And frequent to street and lane,  
many-windowed high shouldered  
chapels.

Whence all the still Sabbath  
ascend loud preaching and  
passionate prayer.  
Such violent wrestling with aln,  
that the dogs on the pavement  
deserted  
Woke with a growl from their  
dreams at the sound of the  
quorulous voice ...

Finally, Phillips takes up and echoes the plea that David Palating once made for renewed interest in Morris's collection of essays published as *The New Rambler* in 1905. Here we see that Morris was not, as he once described himself to Tennyson, "a subaltern in the army of which you are Commander in Chief", but a rounded and sophisticated critic with strong and interesting views on Gladstone, diplomacy, Wales and the state of literature. He was more than a prolific versifier, and indeed there was far more to him than his readers suspected. Not the least reason to welcome this book is that in pulling together all the biographical details, it reminds us of a Welsh mystery story.

The biographical orthodoxy is that Morris married in 1868 but that this did not become public knowledge until 1902. His wife was the widow of an American and she was to bear

him three children. The members of this family lit through this book like phantoms and they help to convert Morris's career into the stuff of Victorian gothic fiction, or of a Jean Rhys novel. The truth is that Morris remained unmarried for years after 1868, that when Lady Morris died in 1927 she was still a shadowy figure and that when one daughter died in 1956 her death certificate recorded her father's occupation as "unknown". At the centre of this mystery was the fact that Florence Morris was a Catholic. Good or bad as a poet, sound or not at the hustings, you could not live with or marry a Catholic in Victorian Wales and expect to get away with it.

The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library has recently published *English Hymnology in the Eighteenth Century* (76pp, available from the University of California, Los Angeles). The volume contains two papers given at Clark Library Seminar in March 1977: "The Language of the Eighteenth-Century Hymn" by David and "The Eighteenth-Century Hymn Tune" by Robert Stevenson. Musical examples, notes and bibliography are also provided.



